

SOVIET COMMUNISM: A
NEW CIVILISATION. BY
SIDNEY AND BEATRICE
WEBB

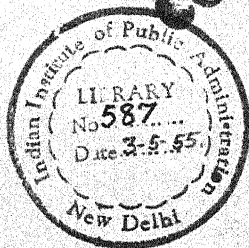
IIPA LIBRARY



587

THIRD EDITION,
IN ONE VOLUME

COMPUTERISED



LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.
LONDON NEW YORK TORONTO

30P
22/3
P.O.B.

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO. LTD.
OF PATERNOSTER ROW

43 ALBERT DRIVE, LONDON, S.W.19

NICOL ROAD, BOMBAY

17 CHITTARANJAN AVENUE, CALCUTTA

36A MOUNT ROAD, MADRAS

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.

55 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK 3

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.

215 VICTORIA STREET, TORONTO 1

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

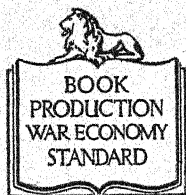
First published, *November 1935*

Second Edition, *October 1937*

Reissue with New Introduction at
a Cheaper Price, *October 1941*

Third Edition in One Volume 1944

New Impression 1947



*This book is produced in
complete conformity with the
authorised economy standards*

CODE NUMBER : 97297-1

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN
BY R. & R. CLARK, LIMITED, EDINBURGH

PREFACE

THIS book calls, perhaps, for some explanation of its scope and plan, if not also of its length. It is not easy to appreciate either the magnitude of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (nearly one-sixth of the entire land-surface of the globe, with a population rapidly approaching 200 millions); or the variety, ranging from barbarism to a high degree of culture, of its hundred or more different races and languages. Its organisational structure is surely the most complicated known to political science. We ask the reader to gaze at the map (frontispiece), and at the two diagrams (pp. 350 and 353 of the Appendices of Part I.) giving precisely the main administrative areas and the principal organs of government of the USSR, which Mr. J. F. Horrabin has specially drawn, upon Mr. S. P. Turin's information, and generously contributed to this work. These diagrams, notwithstanding their wealth of symbols, can do no more than start the requisite impression of complication of federation within federation, and of tier upon tier of local governing bodies and central administrative organs. But in addition to all that is indicated by the map and those diagrams of the organisation of the citizens, the reader has to visualise the wholly different and not less complicated organisation of these same men and women in wealth production, whether as independent producers, or as wage or salary earners in their trade unions, or as groups of co-partners in agriculture, in hunting and fishing, or in manufacture. There is yet a third universal organisation of these 40 million families in their capacity of consumers, in which they become members of a hierarchy of some 45,000 local societies for the distribution among themselves of the foodstuffs and other commodities of their domestic housekeeping. And we have still to name a fourth pyramidal and equally ubiquitous organisation, the most unique and original, and some would say the most significant of all, made up of the extensive membership of what we have termed the Vocation of Leadership.

Even this is not the whole story. The degree of complication of the administrative, industrial and political structure of the USSR does but correspond with the magnitude and variety of the functions for which the structure is elaborated: functions which transcend in scope and range those consciously and deliberately undertaken by any other community. And, in each department, structure and function are intertwined with each other and with a wealth of voluntary associations and spontaneous individual activities to constitute a highly integrated society which definitely forms a synthesis. In all social history—that "endless adventure of governing men"—there has been no such a colossal and so exciting an experiment. It takes us over 760 pages, constituting the six chapters and appendices of Part I. and the first four chapters of Part II., to set forth all the welter of structure and function making up

what is, merely in magnitude, the biggest integrated social organisation in the world.

This widely comprehensive and, as it seems to-day, solidly united mass organisation, is brand new, not yet twenty years old, and is still rapidly developing. We suggest that, if it endures, its eventual impact on the rest of the world must be considerable. Its aims are grandiose and far-reaching. With what purpose are its leaders and directors animated? What is the philosophy on which their lives are based? Upon what motives and instruments do they rely for the attainment of their ends? What original conceptions of economics and political science, and what new inventions in systems of wealth production and of social relations, are being worked out in the Soviet Union, where, by the way, they claim, by their novel adjustment of a planned supply to a universally effective demand, to have definitely got rid of involuntary unemployment? Can it be true that there is evolving, out of the incessant public discussions of the millions of adolescents between the Baltic and the Pacific, a new ethical system, with a code of conduct emerging from their actual experience of a transformed social life? These issues are discussed in Chapters XI. and XII. Finally, we add a short epilogue raising the question whether what the world is witnessing to-day in the USSR does not amount to a new civilisation, differing from any that has hitherto existed; and whether it is likely to spread beyond its present borders.

But why undertake so great a task as a comprehensive description of the entire social order of the USSR? The answer is that it has been borne in on us by experience that the first step to any competent understanding of what is happening in the USSR is that the picture should be viewed as a whole. At the outset it may seem easier for each student to confine his investigation into his own particular speciality, and to write a detailed monograph upon what the USSR has done in that limited field. But unless and until the organisation of the Soviet Union has been studied as a whole, and some intelligent comprehension has been gained of its complicated structure and manifold activities; of its aim and purpose; of the direction in which it is travelling; of its instruments and its methods; and of its philosophy—no satisfying judgment can be passed upon any part of its work. No survey either of its achievements or of its shortcomings in wealth production or in artistic development, in education or in medicine, in changing the standard of living or revising the bounds of freedom, can be competently made without a grasp of the principles of multiformity and universalism that run through the warp and weft of every part of its texture. It is not the failure or the fulfilment of any one function that is significant, but the life of the whole; and, be it added, not so much what the ever-moving mass is to-day, as whence it has come and whither it is tending. It is for this reason that we have, greatly daring, attempted to map the whole of what we may picture as the Eurasian Plain, in the belief that, however imperfect our survey, it will help other travellers to find their way in more detailed

studies of their own specialities, by which our necessarily superficial sketches may be corrected, supplemented or superseded.

Contrary to common expectation, we have found the material for our work abundant and accessible. Of the vast outpouring of books in many languages since 1917, giving tourists' impressions of the land of the soviets, together with the better authenticated narratives of the resident newspaper correspondents, we need not speak. Among the more scientific studies of which we have been able to make substantial use in enlargement and correction of our own researches, we have to acknowledge that by far the greatest proportion stand to the credit of the United States—an outcome, we think, not only of the wider interest taken by that country than by Great Britain in a new social order, which is now attracting thousands of immigrants from the United States, but also of the large number of scholarships and fellowships enabling scientific researchers to spend a year or more in the USSR for the production of valuable monographs. There are far too few such opportunities yet provided for the British student.

In addition to the stream of books affording descriptions by eye-witnesses of what they have seen in the USSR, there is available to the serious student an unusual output of printed documents by the Soviet Government through many of its departments; by the ancient Academy of Sciences, and the thousand and one scientific research institutes, and the exploring expeditions that they send out; by the trade unions; by the Industrial Cooperative Societies; by the Consumers' Cooperative Movement; and, last but not least, by the Communist Party. These masses of reports and statistics are not all in Russian, nor yet in the languages of the various national minorities. Probably no other government in the world issues so large a mass of documents in languages other than its own (largely in English, French or German), whether as the proceedings of conferences or congresses, or the decrees and codes, or the speeches of its leading statesmen, or the reports of the discoveries of the scientific exploring parties, or the instructions to subordinate departments. In addition to these documents there is the large and always increasing soviet press, from such leading journals as *Pravda* and *Izvestia*, and their scores of local imitators, down to the innumerable news-sheets and wall newspapers of the factories and mines, of the collective farms, and of the state, municipal and cooperative plants and offices; whilst, for those who are interested in the personal life of the soviet citizen there are novels and plays, comic periodicals and all varieties of exhibition of the self-criticism in which the Russians delight. Nor are foreigners neglected. The Moscow press turns out daily and weekly organs, widely distributed throughout the USSR, in English, German and French. These journals, like all newspapers in the USSR, are almost entirely filled with information about the doings of the Sovnarkom, and the Central Committee of the Communist Party, or with detailed descriptions of the workings of mines, oilfields, factories and state or collective farms, statistics of the extent of

fulfilment of the Five-Year Plan, and other instructional material. Meanwhile, the powerful wireless stations in Moscow broadcast the same kind of thing nightly to the world in no fewer than fourteen European languages, together with Esperanto.

Although we have aimed at precision in our references, we do not indulge in a comprehensive bibliography. We have thought it more likely to be helpful to students wishing to explore further any of the topics with which we deal to give in each chapter a list of the principal sources of information accessible to British or American students (usually omitting therefore books existing only in Russian or Ukrainian, even where we have had relevant extracts from them translated for our own use).

Throughout our work we have had the valuable assistance of Mr. S. P. Turin, lecturer at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies and the London School of Economics and Political Science in the University of London, who has not only kept us continuously up to date about what is being published in the USSR, but has also freely placed at our disposal much additional information derived from his long study of his native land both prior and subsequent to the Revolution. His recent book *From Peter the Great to Lenin* supplies a valuable historical introduction to the present labour movement. Mr. Turin has enabled us to avoid many mistakes without necessarily sharing either our viewpoint or our opinions; and he is in no way responsible for our generalisations or our judgments.

We must mention also the assistance we have derived from Dr. Julius F. Hecker, alike through his books, *Religion and Communism*, *Moscow Dialogues*, *Russian Sociology* and others, and through our illuminating discussions with him in Moscow and London. Indeed, we must gratefully acknowledge the continuous help we have received during the past four years from friends too numerous to mention, scientific and literary, Russian and non-Russian, residents in the USSR and also exiles of more than one generation, and of all shades of opinion. At all times, and notably during our visits to the USSR, the soviet authorities have willingly answered our innumerable questions, and given us every facility for going anywhere that we wanted to go; for seeing works, factories and farms, schools and hospitals, and other institutions, as well as for admission to meetings that we wished to attend. We have gathered much, not only from officials but also from trade unionists, teachers, engineers, doctors, peasants and fishermen, not omitting to take due note of what we have been told by discontented intelligentsia and disgruntled revolutionaries both inside the USSR and elsewhere.

What we have sought to present is an objective view of the whole social order of the USSR as it exists to-day, with no more past history than is necessary for explanation, and with an intelligent impression of the direction in which it is travelling. We have not hesitated to criticise anything that seemed to us to call for criticism. We do not pretend to be

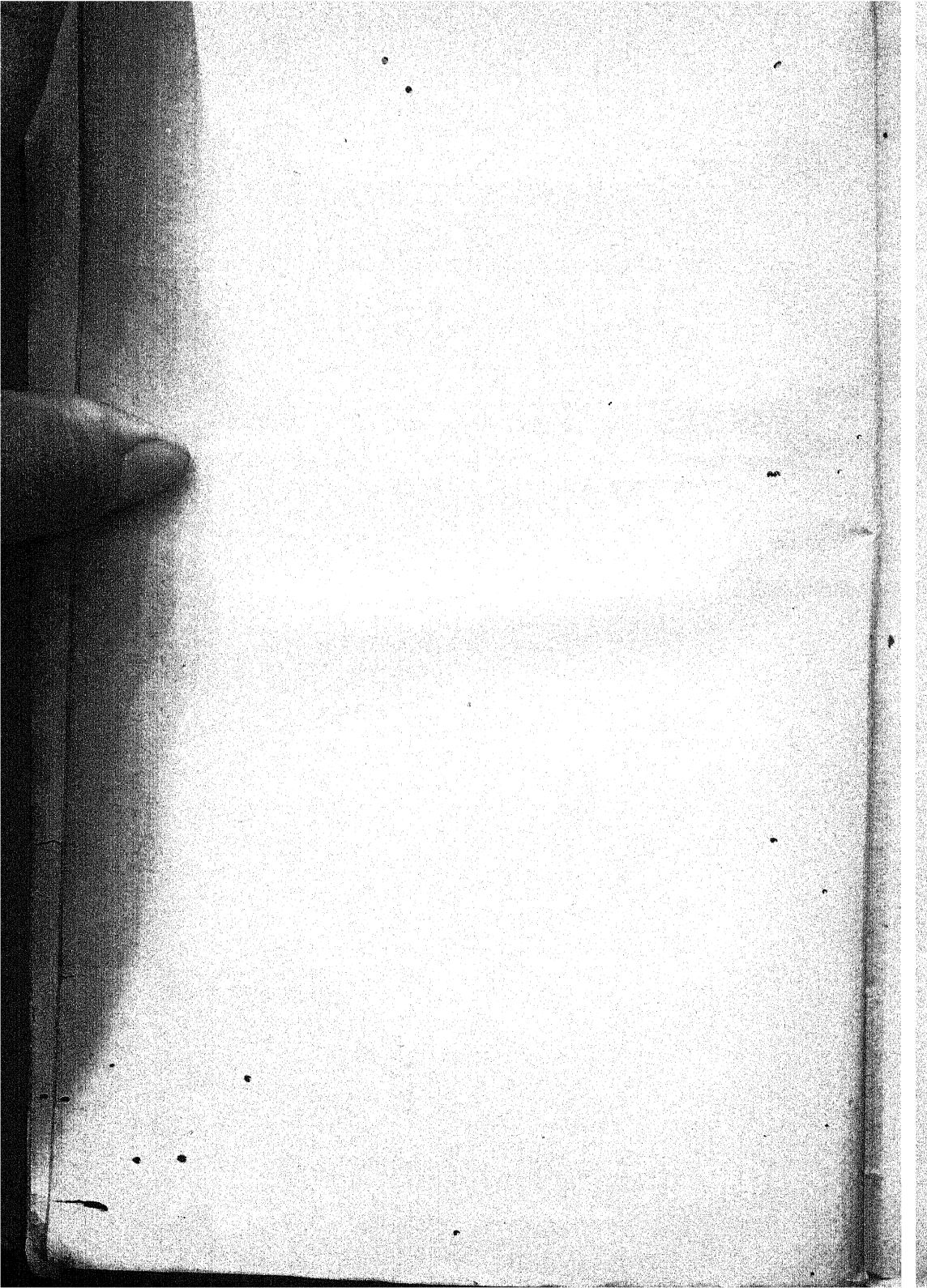
without bias (who is ?), but we have tried to be aware of our bias, and have striven for objectivity.

The question will arise in some quarters : Why did two aged mortals, both nearing their ninth decade, undertake a work of such magnitude ? We fear our presumption must be ascribed to the recklessness of old age. In our retirement, with daily bread secured, we had nothing to lose by the venture—not even our reputation, which will naturally stand or fall upon our entire output of the past half-century, to the load of which one more book makes no appreciable difference. On the other hand, we had a world to gain—a new subject to investigate ; a fresh circle of stimulating acquaintances with whom to discuss entirely new topics, and above all a daily joint occupation, in intimate companionship, to interest, amuse and even excite us in the last stage of life's journey. This world we have gained and enjoyed. To use a theological term, this book is therefore to be received as a work of supererogation, which, as we understand it, means something not required, but spontaneously offered, which may be ignored or criticised, but which does not warrant blame, even if it be deemed (to use the words of Steele) “ an act of so great supererogation as singing without a voice ” ! Or, to take a humbler analogy, it may be taken as the etcetera, often thrown in as a gift by the salesman with a package of goods already paid for. As such we may present it unabashed to our British and American readers.

The reader will find at the end of Part I. (pp. 410-431) an exceptionally accurate translation of the complete text of the New Constitution of 1936, by Mrs. Anna Louise Strong, to whom we are indebted for permission to reprint it. We give also a summary in the form of a new Declaration of the Rights of Man. At the end of Part II., after the Epilogue, we add a lengthy Postscript (pp. 918-973), dealing with the principal changes in the Soviet Union since 1934-1935.

SIDNEY AND BEATRICE WEBB

October 1937.



CONTENTS

PREFACE	PAGE vii
INTRODUCTION	xix

PART I. THE CONSTITUTION

CHAPTER I

THE CONSTITUTION AS A WHOLE	1
---------------------------------------	---

Preliminary survey—Declaration of Rights of the Labouring and Exploited Peoples—Proclamation of the Soviet Union.

CHAPTER II

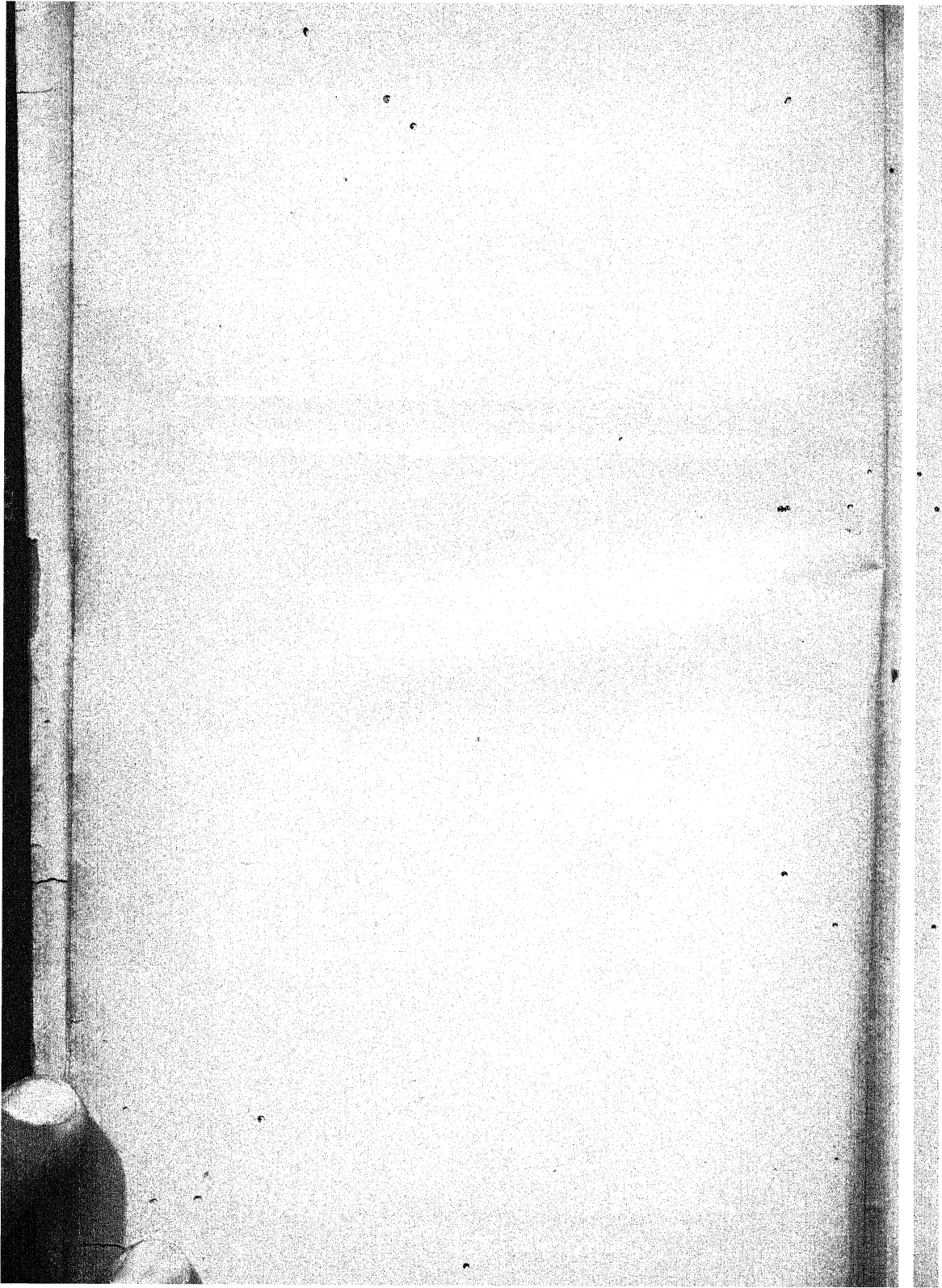
MAN AS A CITIZEN	7
----------------------------	---

The Origin of the Soviet System—The Base of the Pyramid—The Village Meeting—The Village Executive—The City Soviet—The Method of Election—The Electors' Instructions—A Moscow Election—The Organisation of the City Soviet—The Rayons in the Cities—Indirect Election—The Rayon—The Oblast—The Seven Federated Republics—The RSFSR—The Ukraine—The White Russian and Transcaucasian Republics—The Formation of the Soviet Union—The All-Union Congress—The Central Executive Committee (TSIK)—The Council of People's Commissars (Sovnarkom)—The Council of Labour and Defence—The Commissariats—The Commissariats dealing with Production and Trade—The People's Commissar of Finance—Banking and Saving—Insurance—The Commissariat of Defence—The Army as a School—The Commissariat of Foreign Affairs—The Commissariat of Internal Affairs—The Ogpu—The Supreme Court—The Procurator—The College of Advocates—The Problem of National Minorities—Cultural Autonomy—The Tartar Republic—The Jews in the USSR—A New Basis for Statehood.

CHAPTER III

MAN AS A PRODUCER	124
-----------------------------	-----

Section I. Soviet Trade Unionism—History—Trade Union Structure in the USSR—Trade Union Elections—The Trade Union Factory Committee—Collective Bargaining in the USSR—The All-Union Congress of each Trade Union—The All-Union Congress of Trade Unions—Lateral Structure in USSR Trade Unionism—The Trade Union Officials—The Transference of the Commissariat of Labour to the Trade Unions—The Shock Brigades and Cost Accounting Committees—Professional Associations—The Profintern—How does Soviet Trade Unionism compare with British Trade Unionism?



CONTENTS

PREFACE	PAGE vii
INTRODUCTION	xix

PART I. THE CONSTITUTION

CHAPTER I

THE CONSTITUTION AS A WHOLE	1
---------------------------------------	---

Preliminary survey—Declaration of Rights of the Labouring and Exploited Peoples—Proclamation of the Soviet Union.

CHAPTER II

MAN AS A CITIZEN	7
----------------------------	---

The Origin of the Soviet System—The Base of the Pyramid—The Village Meeting—The Village Executive—The City Soviet—The Method of Election—The Electors' Instructions—A Moscow Election—The Organisation of the City Soviet—The Rayons in the Cities—Indirect Election—The Rayon—The Oblast—The Seven Federated Republics—The RSFSR—The Ukraine—The White Russian and Transcaucasian Republics—The Formation of the Soviet Union—The All-Union Congress—The Central Executive Committee (TSIK)—The Council of People's Commissars (Sovnarkom)—The Council of Labour and Defence—The Commissariats—The Commissariats dealing with Production and Trade—The People's Commissar of Finance—Banking and Saving—Insurance—The Commissariat of Defence—The Army as a School—The Commissariat of Foreign Affairs—The Commissariat of Internal Affairs—The OGPU—The Supreme Court—The Procurator—The College of Advocates—The Problem of National Minorities—Cultural Autonomy—The Tartar Republic—The Jews in the USSR—A New Basis for Statehood.

CHAPTER III

MAN AS A PRODUCER	124
-----------------------------	-----

Section I. Soviet Trade Unionism—History—Trade Union Structure in the USSR—Trade Union Elections—The Trade Union Factory Committee—Collective Bargaining in the USSR—The All-Union Congress of each Trade Union—The All-Union Congress of Trade Unions—Lateral Structure in USSR Trade Unionism—The Trade Union Officials—The Transference of the Commissariat of Labour to the Trade Unions—The Shock Brigades and Cost Accounting Committees—Professional Associations—The Profintern—How does Soviet Trade Unionism compare with British Trade Unionism?

Section II. The Associations of Owner-Producers.

(a) The Self-governing Workshop—The Members' Meeting—The Regional Council—The All-Union Council of Industrial Cooperatives.

(b) The Collective Farm—The Unproductive Peasant—The Crisis in Foodstuffs—The Prolonged Discussion as to Policy—The Policy of Universal Collectivisation—The Struggle for Efficiency in the Kolkhosi—State Machinery for Control: (1) The New People's Commissar; (2) The New Agricultural Departments; (3) Supervision by the Village Soviets—The Machine and Tractor Stations—The Work of the Policy Sections—Was there a Famine in the USSR in 1931-1932?—Life on a Collective Farm—Management—Democracy in Agriculture—The Commune—The Results in 1933-1935.

(c) Miscellaneous Associations of Owner-Producers—The Fishermen's Kolkhosi—Integral Cooperatives—War Invalids, etc.

(d) Associations of Artistic and Intellectual Producers.
The World of Labour in the USSR.

CHAPTER IV

MAN AS A CONSUMER

235

The Hierarchy of Consumers' Cooperation—The Members' Meeting—The Committee of Management—The Rayon Union with the Rayon Council (Raisoyus)—The Oblast or Republic Union with its Council (Oblsoyus)—The All-Union Congress of Consumers' Cooperatives, with its Central Board for the USSR and the RSFSR (Centrosoyus)—The Mechanised Bakeries—Cooperative Education—The Rivals of the Consumers' Cooperative in Retail Distribution—Recent Encroachments on the Sphere of the Consumers' Cooperative Movement—Network of Contracts for Supplies.

CHAPTER V

THE VOCATION OF LEADERSHIP

262

How the Communist Party arose—The Party Membership—The Rules of the Order—The Meaning of Leadership—The Party Group (late fraction)—The Primary Party Organ (late cell or nucleus)—The District (Rayon) Conference—The Republic Congress—The USSR and RSFSR Party Congress—The Central Committee—The Motives for Party Membership—The Purging of the Party—The Internal Reorganisation of 1934—The Comsomols—The Pioneers and the Octobrists—The Comintern—The Nature of the Communist Party—Why, in Soviet Communism, National Leadership requires an Elaborate Organisation.

CHAPTER VI

DICTATORSHIP OR DEMOCRACY?

324

The Meaning of Dictatorship—Is the Party a Dictator?—Is Stalin a Dictator?—The Dictatorship of the Proletariat—Is the USSR an Autocracy?—In whose Interest does the Government act?—A New Social Form?

APPENDICES TO PART I

	PAGE
I. Diagram of the Political Structure of the USSR. Table I.—Political Structure	351
II. Diagram of the Administrative Structure of the USSR. Table II.—Administrative Structure	354
III. Appendix to Chapter I.—The Declaration of the Central Executive Committee of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics of July 13, 1923	355
IV. Appendix to Chapter II.—The Powers and Authorised Functions of the Village Soviet	358
V. Appendix to Chapter II.—The Sections and Commissions of the City Soviets	363
VI. Appendix to Chapter II.—Note relating to the Commissariat for Workers' and Peasants' Inspection (Rabkrin, or RKI).	365
VII. Appendix to Chapter II.—The Internal Organisation of the Narkomat of Sovkhosi	369
VIII. Appendix to Chapter II.—The Internal Organisation of the Narkomat of Agriculture	374
IX. Appendix to Chapter IV.—List of the 154 Trade Unions among which the Membership of the 47 Trade Unions of 1931 was distributed in 1934	380
X. The Duties and Functions of the Factory Committees	384
XI. Appendix to Chapter III.—The Collective Agreement (Kol-dogovor) of the Fraising-Lathe Works at Gorki for the year 1933-1934	391
XII. Appendix to Chapters II. and VI.—The New Constitution and Summary of the Rights of Man	410

PART II. SOCIAL TRENDS IN SOVIET COMMUNISM

CHAPTER VII

THE LIQUIDATION OF THE LANDLORD AND THE CAPITALIST	438
--	-----

The Liquidation of the Agrarian Landlords by the Peasantry—The Expropriation of the Capitalist—The Civil War and Foreign Invasion—War Communism—The Famine of 1921—The New Economic Policy—The Persecution of the Intelligentsia—The Trial of the Industrial Party—The Trial of the Menshevik Professors—Trial of the Metro-Vickers Engineers—Murder of Kirov—The Liquidation of the Kulaks—The Activities of the Tcheka and the Ogpu—The Organisation of the Ogpu—The Constructive Work of the Ogpu—The Procurator of the USSR—Three Revolutions in One—Comparison with the English Revolution.

CHAPTER VIII

PLANNED PRODUCTION FOR COMMUNITY CONSUMPTION	495
--	-----

The Episode of Workers' Control—The Supreme Economic Council—The Emergence of the General Plan—Krassin's Exposition of Planning in 1920—Gosplan as Planning Authority—How the Plan is Made—The Provisional Plan—The General Object of Soviet Planning—The Division of the Nation's Income between Current Consumption and Capital Invest-

ment—National Defence—The Development of Education—Public Health and Housing—The Final Plan—The Efficiency of a Planned Economy—The World's Argument about the Plan—The Plan obviates both Booms and Slumps—The Abolition of Involuntary Unemployment—The Abstract Economist's Criticism of a Planned Economy—A Communist Reply to the Economist's Criticism—How the General Plan might be Upset—"But Planning means Slavery"—Consumers' Control instead of Producers' Control—Citizens' Control where that of the Consumer Fails—The Supposed "Coercion of the Consumer"—Greater Freedom of Choice for the masses.

CHAPTER IX

IN PLACE OF PROFIT 569

The Old Incentives Remodelled—Not Equality of Wages—How Piece-work Rates are Fixed—The Grading of Wages—Payment According to Social Value—The Machinery of Arbitration—Self-Employment as an Alternative to the Wage System—Individual Self-Employment—Self-Employment in Manufacturing Artels (Incops)—Self-Employment in Collective Farms (Kolkhosi)—The Complicated Network of Agreements for Supplies—The Bazaar—Socialist Emulation—Patronage—The Udarniki (Shock Brigaders)—Cost Accounting Brigades—Subbotniki, or Voluntary Labourers—Public Honour and Shame—The Soviet Orders of Merit—Public Dishonour—Encouragement of Inventions by the Workers—Multiformity in Employment—The Practice of Self-Criticism—Shortcomings and Achievements—The Wasteful Costs of Inexperience—The Inefficiency caused by Overlapping of Control—Where are the Captains of Industry?—The Substitute for Profit-making—An Analysis of the Producers.

CHAPTER X

THE REMAKING OF MAN 653

(a) Health—The Woman—Motherhood—Infancy—Birth Control—The Control of Abortion—Creating Health—How the Health Service is Administered—The Staffing of the Service—Hospitals—Health Centres in Factories—Rural Consultation Points—The Flying Squad—The Campaign against Tuberculosis—The Night Sanatorium—Provision for Street Casualties—Medical Research—A City of the Science and Art of Health.

(b) Economic Security—How the System of Economic Security Developed—Death Benefit—Sickness Benefit—Invalidity and Old-Age Benefit—Maternity Benefit—Unemployment Benefit—Other Benefits—Rest Houses and Sanatoria—Personal Credit—Imperfections of the System.

(c) Education—Universalism—Polytechnikisation—The Organisation of Leisure—Physical Culture—Political Culture—Artistic Culture—Museums and Picture Galleries—Theatre and Ballet—Music—Holidays and Amusements—The Meaning of Culture—The Civilisation of a Whole Nation—Educational Shortcomings.

(d) Changing the Environment—The Service of Housing—Systematic Town Planning—Municipal Services.

CHAPTER XI

SCIENCE THE SALVATION OF MANKIND

PAGE
761

The Struggle with Nature—What Marxism Means—The Organisation of Scientific Research—How Research is Planned and Executed—The Academy of Sciences—The Communist Academy—Popular Participation—The Work of the Several Research Institutes—Mathematics and Physics—The Materials and Processes of Wealth Production—Agriculture—Genetics—The Fight for Health—The Central Institute of Röntgenology—The Leningrad Institute of the Brain—The Leningrad Institute of Experimental Medicine—The Moscow Institute of Endocrinology—The Campaign against Rheumatism—The Central Aero Hydro-Dynamic Institute—The Exploring Expeditions—The Unevenness in the Development of Science—The Need for Study of Social Institutions—The Science of Human Behaviour—The Disease of Orthodoxy—"Anti-Godism"—The Campaign against Religion.

CHAPTER XII

THE GOOD LIFE

818

The Pursuit of Plenty—For the Whole Population—With Advanced Industrialism—In Social Equality—The "Classless Society"—A Compulsory Environment—Plan or No Plan—Where is Freedom?—Unity in Action with Adventure in Thought—The Solution of the Problem—The Evolution of Communist Ethics—No Sense of Original Sin—No Absolute Morals—Ethics emerging from Life—The Constant Service of the Community—The Payment of Debt—The Maximising of Health—Sexual Intercourse—Prostitution—What is "Not Done"—Personal Acquisitiveness—The Duty of the Party Member—To each according to his Needs—Ethical Progress in the USSR—The Withering of the State—Contradictory Trends in Foreign Affairs—The Policy and Activities of the Third International—Soviet China—The Comintern Congress of 1928—The Change of the Soviet Government from War to Peace—Joining in International Conferences and the League of Nations—Contrast between Comintern and Sovnarkom—The Comintern Congress of 1935—Prospects of greater Consistency—The Obstacle to Communist Propaganda of "Government from Moscow".

EPILOGUE

A NEW CIVILISATION?

898

What constitutes a Distinct Civilisation?—Other Civilisations—The Eight Principal Novelties in Soviet Civilisation—The Abolition of Profit-making—The Planning of Production for Community Consumption—Social Equality and Universalism—A Novel Representative System—The Vocation of Leadership—The Cult of Science—"Anti-Godism"—A New Conscience for the Good Life—These make a Synthetic Unity in contrast with Disintegrating Capitalism—Will it Endure?—Will it Spread?

POSTSCRIPT TO THE SECOND EDITION

PAGE
918

The New Constitution—Its Significance—The Moscow Trials—The Stakhanov Movement—The Success of Collective Agriculture—The Retailing of Commodities—Soviet Currency—The Control of Abortion—Some Criticisms—Inequality of Incomes—Bureaucracy—Repression of Independent Thinking—A New Civilisation.

INDEX OF PERSONS (with brief biographical details)	974
INDEX OF PLACES	989
INDEX OF SUBJECTS	992

INTRODUCTION

SINCE the signing of the German-Soviet Pact in 1939 I have been frequently asked by bewildered friends : Is there any distinction between the status and activities of Stalin on the one hand and Hitler and Mussolini on the other : are these three men all alike dictators ? And secondly, have these three sovereign states similar constitutions by law established : or is the Soviet Union, unlike Germany and Italy, a political democracy similar in essence, if not in detail, to the political democracies of the U.S.A. and Great Britain ? And assuming that the Soviet Union is a political democracy, has democratic control of the instruments of production, distribution and exchange been added so that the government should be, not merely a government of the people by the people, but also a government for the good of the people ? Finally, is it right to suggest that Soviet Communism is a new civilisation which will, in spite of the crudities and cruelties inherent in violent revolution and fear of foreign aggression, result in maximising the wealth of the nation and distributing it among all the inhabitants on the principle of from each man according to his faculty and to each man according to his need ?

Is Stalin a Dictator ?

To answer the first question—Is Stalin a dictator ?—we must agree on what meaning is to be attached to the term *dictator* : otherwise argument is waste of time. Assuming that we accept the primary meaning of the term *dictator*, as it is defined in the *New English Dictionary*—“ a ruler or governor whose word is law ; an absolute ruler of the state—and who authoritatively prescribes a course of action or dictates what is to be done ” (the example given being the Dictators of ancient Rome)—Stalin is not a dictator. So far as Stalin is related to the constitution of the USSR, as amended in 1936, he is the duly elected representative of one of the Moscow constituencies to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. By this assembly he has been selected as one of the thirty members of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, accountable to the representative assembly for all its activities. It is this Presidium which selects the Council of Commissars (Sovnarkom) and, during the intervals between the meetings of the Supreme Soviet, controls the policy of the Sovnarkom, of which Molotov has been for many years the Prime Minister, and, since 1939, also the Foreign Secretary. In May 1941, Stalin, hitherto content to be a member of the Presidium, alarmed at the menace of a victorious German army invading the Ukraine, took over, with the consent of the Presidium, the office of Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, leaving Molotov as Foreign Secretary ; in exactly the same way, and for a similar reason—the world war—that Winston Churchill, with

the consent of the House of Commons, became Prime Minister and Minister of Defence with Chamberlain, the outgoing Prime Minister, as a prominent member of the British Cabinet. As Prime Minister I doubt whether Stalin would have offered, as Churchill did, to amalgamate the USSR on terms of equality with another Great Power without consulting the Presidium of which he was a member. Neither the Prime Minister of the British Cabinet nor the presiding member of the Sovnarkom has anything like the autocratic power of the President of the U.S.A., who not only selects the members of his Cabinet subject to the formal control of the Senate, but is also Commander-in-Chief of the American armed forces and, under the Lease-Lend Act, is empowered to safeguard, in one way or another, the arrival of munitions and food at the British ports. By declaring, in May this year, a state of unlimited national emergency, President Roosevelt legally assumes a virtual dictatorship of the United States. He has power to take over transport, to commandeer the radio for the purposes of propaganda, to control imports and all exchange transactions, to requisition ships and to suspend laws governing working hours, and, most important of all, to decide on industrial priorities and, if necessary, to take over industrial plants.

In what manner, then, does Stalin exceed in authority over his country's destiny the British Prime Minister or the American President? The office by which Stalin earns his livelihood and owes his predominant influence is that of general secretary of the Communist Party, a unique organisation the characteristics of which, whether good or evil, I shall describe later on in this volume. Here I will note that the Communist Party, unlike the Roman Catholic and Anglican Church, is not an oligarchy; it is democratic in its internal structure, having a representative congress electing a central committee which in its turn selects the Politbureau and other executive organs of the Communist Party. Nor has Stalin ever claimed the position of a dictator or fuhrer. Far otherwise; he has persistently asserted in his writings and speeches that as a member of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, he is merely a colleague of thirty other members, and that so far as the Communist Party is concerned he acts as general secretary under the orders of the executive. He has, in fact, frequently pointed out that he does no more than carry out the decisions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. Thus, in describing his momentous article known as "Dizzy with Success", he expressly states that this was written on "the well-known decisions of the Central Committee regarding the fight 'against Distortions of the Party Line' in the collective farm movement. . . . In this connection", he continues, "I recently received a number of letters from comrades, collective farmers, calling upon me to reply to the questions contained in them. It was my duty to reply to the letters in private correspondence; but that proved to be impossible, since more than half the letters received did not have the addresses of the writers (they forgot to send their addresses). Nevertheless the questions raised in these letters

are of tremendous political interest to our comrades. . . . In view of this I found myself faced with the necessity of replying to the comrades in an open letter, *i.e.* in the press. . . . I did this all the more willingly since I had a direct decision of the Central Committee to this purpose."

Is the USSR a Political Democracy ?

In answer to the second question—Is the USSR a political democracy ?—it is clear that, tested by the Constitution of the Soviet Union as revised and enacted in 1936,¹ the USSR is the most inclusive and equalised democracy in the world. The Supreme Soviet of the USSR consists of two chambers—the Soviet of the Union and the Soviet of Nationalities. The Soviet of the Union is directly elected by the citizens in electoral districts of one deputy for three hundred thousand inhabitants, the number of deputies to-day being over twelve hundred. The Soviet of Nationalities, with over six hundred deputies, also directly elected, aims at giving additional representation to ethnical groups whether manifested in colour or figure, language or literature, religion or manners, inhabiting large areas of the USSR. These separate Constituent Republics (now sixteen, formerly eleven) are supplemented by smaller local areas also distinguished by racial characteristics, termed Autonomous Republics or Autonomous Regions, to all of whom are allotted a small number of deputies to the Soviet of Nationalities. The two chambers which make up the Supreme Soviet of the USSR have equal rights, and their sessions begin and terminate simultaneously. Joint sessions of both chambers are needed to ratify legislation and meet twice a year, and are convened by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet at its direction, or on demand of one of the constituent republics. All these assemblies, whether the Soviet of the Union or the Soviet of Nationalities, together with a network of subordinate provincial, municipal and village soviets, are directly elected by secret ballot, by all the inhabitants over eighteen years of age, without distinction of sex, race or religion, or political or social opinion. For instance, the "deprived class" of the earlier constitutions, former landlords and capitalist profit-makers, relations of the late Tsar, or members of a religious order, are now included on the register of voters. I may add that nearly fifty thousand practising priests of the Greek Orthodox Church, together with several hundreds of Roman Catholics, Evangelicals, Mohammedans and Buddhist officiants, were enfranchised by the constitution of 1936.

The Insistence on Racial Equality

How does this constitution of the Soviet Union compare with that of Great Britain which assumes to be a political democracy? Passing

¹ The first meeting of the freely elected Supreme Soviet of the USSR took place in January 1938 (see page 431).

over the doubtful characteristics in the constitution of Great Britain itself with its forty-seven million inhabitants—for instance, the hereditary House of Lords and the prerogative of the King to refuse sanction to statutes passed by the House of Commons and rejected by the House of Lords—let us admit that the Home Country (after the enfranchisement of women in 1919) is a political democracy. What about the constitution of the British Commonwealth of Nations with its five hundred million inhabitants? Within this vast area only seventy millions are governed by a political democracy. Even among the self-governing Dominions which are assumed to be political democracies, one—the South African Union—refuses any participation in its government by the coloured races who are the majority of the inhabitants; whilst Canada and Australia ignored the native tribes (when they did not exterminate them) as possible citizens of the newly formed state. New Zealand is the one honourable exception; the British emigrants, once they had conquered the island, accepted the Maoris as fully-fledged citizens, not only as electors, but as members of the legislature and in many cases members of the Cabinet. Leaving out of consideration the fifty or so small protectorates or mandated territories, we note that India with its four hundred million inhabitants is mainly governed by a British civil service, and though we may believe in the good intentions of our Government to make it into a self-governing Dominion, we imprisoned without trial some seven thousand natives who spend their lives in propaganda for Indian independence, and condemned their remarkable and highly gifted leader, Nehru, to five years' rigorous imprisonment.

The British Commonwealth of Nations is not alone among the capitalist democracies in the refusal to accept racial equality within its own territory, as a necessary characteristic of political democracy. In the U.S.A. the negroes, though assumed by the federal constitution to be entitled to vote and to represent voters, are by the electoral law and administrative practice of particular states excluded from being fully-fledged citizens with the right to vote and to become representatives. The Dutch and Belgian empires have a like discrimination against the native inhabitants. Hence, if equal rights to all races within a sovereign state is a necessary characteristic of political democracy, the USSR stands out as a champion of this form of liberty.

Thus, one of the outstanding features of Soviet political democracy is racial equality; the resolute refusal to regard racial characteristics as a disqualification for the right to vote, to be deputies to the legislative assembly, to serve on the executive or to be appointed salaried officials. One of the reasons for the Anti-Comintern Axis, uniting Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy and Shintoist Japan in hostility to the Soviet Union, was this insistence by the Bolshevik government on racial equality throughout the USSR. These three Great Powers were all alike intent on extending, by force of arms, the dominance of their own race over new territories inhabited by so-called inferior races, who have no right to self-determina-

tion and were to accept the social order imposed by the conqueror, or to risk extermination.

The One-Party System

There is, however, one characteristic of the political democracy of the USSR as formulated in the Constitution of 1936 which needs explanation of how and why it exists, if only because it has led to a denial by some fervent political democrats that the Soviet Union is a political democracy. This seemingly objectionable feature is the One-Party System of government.

I admit that as an original member of the British Labour Party and the wife of a leading member of His Majesty's Opposition and, for two short intervals, of a minority labour government, I had a stop in the mind when I read the following article in the New Constitution of the USSR, 1936 :

"In accordance with the interests of the working people and for the purpose of developing the organised self-expression and political activity of the masses of the people, citizens of the USSR are ensured the right to unite in public organisations—trade unions, cooperative associations, youth organisations, sport and defence organisations, cultural, technical and scientific societies ; and the most active and politically-conscious citizens from the ranks of the working class and other strata of the working people unite in the All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks), which is the vanguard of the working people in their struggle to strengthen and develop the socialist system and which represents the leading nucleus of all organisations of the working people, both social and state." This means, in fact, though it is not explicitly stated, that no other purely political organisation is permitted to function in the USSR.

A study of the facts suggests that when a revolutionay government is confronted with the task of educating a mass of illiterate and oppressed peoples, of diverse races and religions, among them primitive tribes, not only to higher levels of health and culture but also in the art of self-government, there is no alternative to the One-Party System with its refusal to permit organised political opposition to the new political and economic order. The recent history of the democratic Republic of Turkey established by that great statesman Kemal Pasha in 1920 is instructive. Faced with a far less difficult task, Kemal Ataturk copied the One-Party System of Turkey's friendly neighbour, the USSR. But after studying the democratic constitution of Great Britain he decided in 1930—to quote from a recent history of Modern Turkey—"that Turkey needed an opposition ; contrary to the advice of the Party, he authorised an experienced politician named Fethi Bey to form an opposition group in the Assembly, and had arrangements made to see that this group—the Independent Republican Party—secured some seats in the Assembly at the General Election." The experiment, we are told, "was not a success.

The various social and religious changes had aroused opposition among the reactionary elements in the country and the existence of Fethi Bey's party provided a justification and focus for the expression of this opposition. There were street fights between supporters of the Opposition and supporters of the Government; numbers of the Independent Republican Party drifted back to the People's Party and the leader himself finally resigned. The régime was not sufficiently consolidated for opposition to it to be encouraged in this way. What Atatürk had in view (apart from the conciliation of democratic opinion abroad) was the education of the people in political issues, for he believed that that education would come from the open clash of opinion in debate in the Assembly. Since the death of Atatürk the project has been revived—this time with the approval of the People's Party. Twelve of the Party deputies were, in the summer of 1939, instructed to form an opposition group of devil's advocates in the Assembly. They remain, however, members of the Parliamentary group of the People's Party, and even attend its meetings, although they may not vote or take part in the discussions there."¹

This solution of an artificially created opposition seems rather far-fetched. Perhaps the Soviet Union's invention of "non-Party" members, nominated by trade unions, cooperative societies, collective farms and all other conceivable associations for science, the arts and sport, is a franker and more feasible method. By the term *non-Party*, I may explain, it is not implied that the delegate is an unbeliever in the living philosophy of Soviet Communism, as would be the case in the use of the term *non-Christian* within a Christian community. All that is meant is that, in respect of the communist faith he is a *layman*: that is (to quote the second meaning in the *New Oxford Dictionary*), "A man who is an outsider, or a non-expert in relation to some particular profession, art or branch of knowledge, especially to law and medicine". These non-Party

¹ *Modern Turkey*, by John Parker and Charles Smith, 1940, Routledge. "Freedom for Colonial Peoples" in *Programme for Victory*, Routledge.

The insistence that an illiterate and uncivilised people requiring to be educated for the art of self-government before they can exercise the right freely and with good results has been brought out by the studies of Professor Macmillan of the natives of South Africa and the West Indies. An ardent supporter of democratic self-government for the natives of our colonies, he describes his conversion, brought to him after years of experience, of the need for a period of apprenticeship to overcome "natural obstacles to freedom". "It is unnecessary to remind you of the stultifying, soul-destroying effect of utter poverty and prolonged physical deficiency. Considerations of political freedom do not touch the oppression of poverty. That this always existed in Africa is clear. It was a revelation to me to find, in parts of Africa, quite untouched by white settlement, or any white influence at all, poverty every whit as abject as that induced by landlessness in South Africa" (*Freedom for Colonial People by Victory*, p. 91, a collection of essays prepared by the Fabian Society, 1941). Hence Macmillan suggested that the superior race who have become the dominant power in a territory inhabited by a primitive race should, before they retire from an authoritative position, educate the native inhabitants not only in the art of self-government, but in the capacity to produce sufficient wealth for a healthy and a cultural life. For a more detailed study of the need for educating the natives in the art of self-government and the maximising of production, see also Macmillan's *Africa Emergent* (Faber, 1938) and *Democratization of the Empire* (Kegan Paul, 1s.).

delegates are said to form the majority in the hundreds of thousands of subordinate soviets, village, city and provincial. Even in the All-Union Congress of Soviets of 1936 which enacted the New Constitution, they constituted 28 per cent of the delegates. "Political democracy in a socialist state", so we are told by the most knowledgeable American student of Soviet Communism, who has lived and worked for many years in the Soviet Union, "demands clearly both the expression of special interests of a relatively permanent nature, and the continuous correlation of all those interests into a unified programme which shall not be the 'either or' of the two-Party system, but an honest attempt to satisfy as nearly as possible the sum-total of popular demand. Both these needs are met by the Soviet Constitution. The special interests of the Soviet citizen are continuously expressed in the public organisations to which he belongs, his trade union, cooperative association, cultural, technical or scientific society. All these organisations have the right to nominate candidates for office (Article 141) and will certainly avail themselves of the right. The Communist Party meantime exists as a central core of members in all of these organisations, drawing out their special demands, correlating them with the rest of the country, and leading them in a direction of a stronger and more prosperous socialist commonwealth. . . ." ¹ This unique characteristic of the Communist Party as created by Lenin and developed by Stalin and his associates, as an organisation for bringing civilisation, not merely to millions of poverty-stricken Slav workers and peasants, released from legal serfdom eighty years ago, but also to Mongolian races and primitive tribes inhabiting the southern and eastern territories of the USSR, will be described later on.

*The Alternative of the One-Party System : the Referendum,
the Initiative and the Recall* ²

Let us now consider the present-day alternatives to the One-Party System as it exists in the USSR. First we have the most theoretically democratic of all methods of the government of the people by the people, that is, an assembly of the whole body of adult citizens, or if that be impracticable owing to masses of electors scattered throughout an extended territory, the referendum, the initiative and the recall. Towards the end of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth century, this obvious type of political democracy was the fashion of the day ; the exemplar of the long-established Republic of Switzerland ³ being cited,

¹ Preface to Anne Louise Strong's translation of the New Soviet Constitution, pp. 87-90.

² In the New Constitution of 1936 the recall is permitted :—Article 142. Every deputy shall be obliged to report to the electors on his work and on the work of the Soviet of working people's deputies, and may at any time be recalled by decision of a majority of the electors in the manner prescribed by law.

³ There are many descriptions of the Swiss Constitution and the working of the referendum, the initiative and the recall. The most authoritative seems to be *The*

described and applauded, especially by Conservative politicians and journalists ; but if free thought and free speech are the test of a political democracy it is one of the most backward of the western democracies, judged by its written constitution, and its present law, no citizen of the Swiss Republic may be a member of the Jesuit Order or of the Communist Party. If he belongs to either of these somewhat discordant partners in the sin of heterodoxy he may not reside in his native land. So far as Great Britain is concerned, we have already experienced this primitive democratic structure in the Open Vestry, an assembly of all the male parishioners for the relief of the poor, the maintenance of roads, the policing of the parish and the levying of the necessary rates to pay for these expensive services. The results were so calamitous that it was superseded by the Closed Vestry, that is, government by an oligarchy renewing itself by cooption ; which, in the early decade of the nineteenth century, gave place, in thickly populated districts, to the Select Vestries under the Sturges Bourne Act of 1818, a representative committee elected by the rate-payers, thus excluding the very poor. The referendum of particular proposals to local electors was continued, however, for some time, with calamitous results for those who believe in the extension of social services. I recall that in my husband's L.C.C. constituency the proposal made by the local authority for the establishment of a public library was negatived by a large majority, the library being afterwards established under statutory authority and being much appreciated by the population. More recent and spectacular experiments in the referendum, the initiative and the recall have been tried in some of the States of the U.S.A. So far as I know, the results have not been encouraging.

Free Discussion prior to Legislative Enactment in the Union

And here, I think, the political scientist might consider quite another use of the referendum, introduced by Soviet statesmen, which seems to *Referendum in Switzerland*, by Simon Deploige, advocate, translated into English by C. P. Trevelyan, edited with notes, introduction and appendices by Lilian Tom, 1898 :

"(5) The prohibition of the Jesuits, which was part of the programme of 1872, may be extended also by Federal ordinance to other religious orders whose action is considered dangerous to the state or disturbs the peace between sects" (Art. 51).

"(6) The foundation of new convents or religious orders and the re-establishment of those which have been suppressed are forbidden (Art. 52)" (p. 115).

See also *Government in Switzerland*, by J. M. Vincent : "The order of the Jesuits", it is stated, "and societies associated with it, are forbidden to locate anywhere in the country, and their activity in church or school is entirely prohibited. The establishment of new monasteries, or the reopening of suppressed cloisters, is also forbidden. The downfall of the Jesuits in Switzerland was caused by their incessant interference in affairs of state, and the intense ultra-montane character of their policy. It was chiefly their agitation that brought about the conflict of religions which resulted in the secession of the *Sonderbund*, and very nearly the downfall of the republic. It was determined that in future this particular activity should be excluded, since without the agitators the people would soon learn to accommodate themselves to each other's religious views. . . . The introduction of the Federal Constitution, the last edition being 1874, introduced proportional representation and destroyed the party system by the referendum, the initiative and the recall" (p. 275).

me to combine the political and economic education of the ordinary man with a unique opportunity for the government to ascertain what the people are thinking and feeling on certain issues, before they proceed to submit the proposed projects of social reconstruction to the supreme representative assembly for acceptance or rejection. This device is to urge all available organisations, whether governmental or voluntary, to hold a series of meetings to discuss freely and openly the particular policy proposed by the government. This was markedly the case with the all-important New Constitution of 1936, after it had been drafted by the Communist Party and the Presidium of the Soviet Union.

"There forthwith ensued the most spectacularly widespread discussion that has ever taken place in connection with any governmental action in history. Under pressure of public demand copies of the draft constitution were issued in editions of ten and fifteen millions, until the grand total of sixty million copies was reached, a greater number than has ever been published of any document in such a brief period. In addition to this publication in pamphlet form, the Constitution was printed in full in more than ten thousand newspapers, with a total circulation of thirty-seven millions. Discussions were held in every farm, factory, school, workers' club. Classes met in repeated sessions to study it. In all there were held 527,000 meetings, with an attendance of thirty-six and a half million people, all of whom felt themselves entitled to send in comments and amendments. The number of suggested amendments which reached the Constitutional Commission, sometimes from individuals and sometimes from organised meetings, totalled 134,000. These were sifted and considered, and the more important suggestions discussed in full session. Some were adopted. Such a plebiscite is without precedent. A people that uses its opportunities of debate so thoroughly has the main requirement for working democracy.

This referendum prior to enactment of the New Constitution does not stand alone. In all the factories and plants and in every trade union, consumers' cooperative movement, and the meetings of local soviets, there is an interminable discussion by the people concerned of what should or should not be done, whether in national legislation or local administration. It is by these spontaneous and intimate discussions of what actually happens or should happen in the workshop or mine, on the railways or in the collective farms, in the school or university, and even within the Communist Party, that the ordinary man and woman becomes an active citizen. This self-criticism—to use the Soviet term—is in fact part of the process of educating the people in the art of self-government. It also enables the national executive to ascertain what exactly are the reactions of all the people concerned to the proposed legislation. A notable instance was the reference, for public discussion throughout the country, of the proposed penalisation of the practice of abortion, unless it were needed for the survival of the mother; a discussion which revealed the opposition of many women, intent on living the life they liked, and

the support of men, anxious to secure the health of their womankind and the increase of the birth-rate deemed necessary for the Soviet Union. There are, of course, some objections to this freedom to criticise ; it may result in hampering the initiative of the director of the plant or the commissar of a public authority. Moreover, when these criticisms are published in the press, they provide the hostile foreigner with evidence of the apparent failure of Soviet Communism. Indeed it is amusing to discover that nearly all the books that are now written proving that there is corruption, favouritism and gross inefficiency in the management of industry and agriculture, are taken from reports of these discussions in the Soviet press, in *Pravda*, the organ of the Communist Party ; in *Izvestia*, the organ of the government ; in *Trud*, the organ of the trade union movement, and in many other local and specialist newspapers. Imagine the thousands of bankruptcies, occurring every year in capitalist countries, being investigated not only by the workers concerned, but also by the inhabitants of the "distressed areas" ; and their proceedings not only reported in the local press, but notified in the government department concerned in maximising production for community consumption. In Great Britain what material they would furnish to the critics of profit-making enterprise.¹ But to those who value free thought and free speech as the most important factor in a democratic world, these risks should seem worth running, as they do apparently in the Soviet Union.

The Two-Party and Many-Party Systems

And now for the past and present alternatives to the One-Party System : the assumed Two-Party System of Great Britain and the U.S.A. or the Many-Party System as displayed in the German Second Reich inaugurated at Weimar in 1919, or in that much-honoured Third Republic of France, established 1871. First, we note that in Great Britain since the Reform Act of 1832, right down to the present day, there has always existed a third party : during the nineteenth century the Irish Party, after 1906 the Labour Party, and since 1924 the Liberal Party. This has resulted in minority governments on more than one occasion, which are upheld or let down by a party representing a small minority—in the case of the Irish Party, a minority who were hostile to the Government of Great Britain whatever its policy might be. Even in the case of the Liberal Party and the Labour Party this support of an existing Government is given or refused according to whether or not the policy of the

¹ There is also what the American big business chiefs call "the English lovely law of libel", i.e. the use by big British capitalists of action for slander or libel to ensure the suppression of all criticism "of the malpractices of capitalist enterprise". This "accepted technique", to quote the Bishop of Birmingham's protest in the House of Lords, June 17, 1941, makes "defence in the law courts so costly, sometimes running into "thousands or even tens of thousands of pounds, which are mere nothing to a multi-millionaire capitalist ring" but are so ruinous to private individuals that no one who is not himself a millionaire dares to risk it.

minority is implemented by the Front Bench, quite irrespective of whether this policy happened to be desired by the majority of the inhabitants. The Two-Party System of the U.S.A., represented in the federal Government by the Republican and Democratic parties, with their bosses and their "spoils system", and leading in the individual states or municipalities to perpetual changes in the constitution, sometimes concentrating dictatorial powers in a Governor or a Mayor, sometimes evolving one or two representative bodies checked by the referendum, the initiative and the recall, is not considered a satisfactory example of political democracy. One of the ablest and most recent students of the American political system states: "The present parties have had their life drained out of them and are now mere shells; collections of professional politicians trading the irrational loyalties of the mass of the voters. It is difficult to see any way of improving the existing parties. The Republicans have all the faults bred by long success and the illusion that all is for the best in the best of all possible parties. The fidelity and success with which the G.O.P. served the dominant interest of the American economic system in the past two generations makes the party, to-day, less able than ever before to meet the altered demands of the new society. The party of business, by its tariff policy, its farm policy, its lack of any rational foreign policy, is now an enemy of many forms of big business. The relationship between the party and business may have been symbiotic in the past, but it is now parasitic. The feeblest industries, the least hopeful activities of the American capitalist system, are those which the Republican party is determined to foster. Nor is the Democratic party any better. Much against its will, it has been unable to identify itself with the economically dominant forces of modern America and is therefore less committed to an obsolete politico-economic technique; it has given fewer hostages to old fortunes. But what it gains in this direction, it loses by its internal incoherence. The victory of 1932 is probably meaningless in relation to party fortunes. The nation has given the ship of state a new master and a new crew and given them sealed orders. If by a miracle of political boldness and sagacity, a new orientation could be given to national policy and that were accompanied by a revival of business, the Democrats might dig themselves in, but such a new course would require a degree of boldness and coherence which the Democrats no more than their rivals have had any chance of developing. If they remain content to be 'maintained by the business interests as a combined lightning rod and lifeboat' (Paul H. Douglas, *The Coming of a New Party*, p. 164) they will give way to the Republicans as soon as the major party has got its breath back. If they start on a really new tack, they will split or cease to be the old Democratic party."¹

Finally, we have the suppression of the Two-Party System which has taken place to-day. His Majesty's Government is no longer checked by His Majesty's Opposition, which has ceased to exist. The Front

¹ *The American Political System*, by D. W. Brogan, 1933, pp. 383-384.

Opposition Bench is occupied by a few Tory and Liberal dissentients together with Labour men who support the Government. The official leader of the Front Opposition Bench is the Right Honourable Arthur Greenwood, a whole-hearted supporter of the National Government. Hence, to-day, we have in Great Britain a One-Party System which is (so the Prime Minister suggests) to continue for some years after the ending of the war. Meanwhile the three official parties, Conservative, Liberal and Labour, have agreed not to contest any bye-election, so as to leave the political Party represented by the retiring or dead M.P. in undisputed possession of the seat. I remember a British Prime Minister who was also a distinguished philosopher observing that the Two-Party System, within a political democracy, is all right "so long as there is no fundamental difference of opinion between the two Parties". Is the transformation of Great Britain from a capitalist democracy to a socialist democracy with its planned production for community consumption, and its elimination of the profit-making motive, the fundamental difference of opinion which will make the Two-Party System impracticable? ¹

Even more sensational has been the fate of the Many-Party System, based on proportional representation and a second ballot, characteristic of the political democracies of continental Europe, whether old-established or created by the Versailles Treaty. Why have the majority of these political democracies collapsed during the last twenty years, to be superseded by a constitutional dictatorship of one sort or another? First Italy, then in quick succession Portugal, Spain, Poland, Greece, Austria, some if not all of the Baltic and Balkan states, and finally the two great

¹ Further, who actually govern the Great Britain of to-day? Is it the rapid succession of Cabinet Ministers and their under-secretaries who come and go, or the permanent civil servants? The practice of changing the principal officers of a government department with a change of the Party in power, as is usual in the United States of America, is universally condemned by political scientists as leading to favouritism and even to financial corruption, in deciding who these civil servants should be. In Great Britain the salaried officials appointed by the national government or local government authorities are life appointments, in the higher positions recruited mainly by competitive examination. In the case of highly specialised occupations, such as medical men, lawyers and chartered accountants and sanitary inspectors, this examination is conducted by the professional organisation and therefore consists, like the Soviet Communist Party, of a self-elected *élite* who alone can practise the profession, whether they are appointed by the state or employed by private individuals. For these reasons the civil service as a whole may be considered as a self-determined *élite* with a specialised knowledge and an obligatory code of personal conduct, and to some extent a social outlook approved of by the existing government, largely influenced by that of the superior civil servants who belong, by origin, and always by social ties, to the landed and capitalist class. It is noteworthy that some of the ablest of the superior civil servants are attracted out of government service by the offer from great capitalist enterprises of salaries four or five times greater than those of the head departments. During the present war the reverse process has taken place, and some of the most important salaried posts have been transferred to profit-making capitalists, thus strengthening the capitalist system as against the socialist movement as represented by the Labour Party. To-day the headship of most of the new functions of government, rendered necessary during the war, such as the rationing of food, the control of shipping, and other types of war production and distribution, have been taken over by business men who have been and are still connected with the particular type of capitalist enterprise concerned.

tragedies of the Weimar Republic of Germany established in 1919, and the honoured Third Republic of France; whilst the democratic governments of Czechoslovakia, Norway,¹ Holland and Belgium are exiled from their own countries and have their headquarters in Great Britain. It is a strange fact that the only constitutional political democracies established in Europe after the Great War, to survive to the present day, are, in fact, the USSR and the Republic of Turkey, both of which have recognised in their constitution the One-Party System of government.²

I cite these failures of the traditional Two-Party System of the U.K. and the U.S.A. and of the Many-Party System of other European capitalist democracies, *not in order to pave the way for the adoption of the One-Party System of the USSR and the Republic of Turkey*, but to raise the question whether sociologists have yet solved the problem of how to organise the government of the people by the people, and be it added, for the good of the people? Is the problem which we have to solve the ascertainment of the personal or public opinion of the inhabitants—if they have any—as to what should be the exact policy of the government in the complicated issues of home and foreign affairs; or is it the understanding and consequent consent of the inhabitants to policies originating in the advice of specialists, with an agreed scale of values of what is right or what is wrong, and with sufficient scientific knowledge of what has happened and is happening, to be able to forecast what will happen if certain steps are taken to make it happen?

¹ "Norway has no two-party system, but proportional representation. The whole country is not one constituency but is divided into eighteen provinces and eleven groups of towns with proportional representation within each separate constituency. Since the last Great War no party has commanded an absolute majority in the national parliament, called the Storting, and no government has been a majority government. This means that generally the administration has not been very strong. . . . There was a feeling that political institutions and procedures had not been readjusted to meet modern conditions; in many quarters there was a craving for 'more business in politics and less politics in business'. Certain sections in the press were constantly trying to ridicule the Storting and the whole political system as not efficient enough. And the complex party situation called for a thorough discussion of the very principles of our parliamentary system. . . ."

"But anybody taking this as an evidence of budding sympathy for a totalitarian system of government would have been entirely mistaken. It was rather evidence of a growing realisation of the waste of energy in Party strife, of a groping toward new means of minimising the costs of friction in public life, of a realisation of the fact that national politics does not mean merely fighting—fighting other Parties and platforms and their political ideas and conceptions, but that it means also (and in daily routine more than anything else) cooperation and coordination." See *I Saw it Happen in Norway*, by Carl J. Hambro, pp. 66, 70-71.

² One of the cardinal defects of the Two-Party or Many-Party System, as contrasted with government by a permanent civil service, or the equivalent, a One-Party *élite*, is that the immediate purpose of a general election, contested by rival Parties, is to bring into office a group of men many of whom have no technical qualification, whether as administrators, or for dealing with such specialised services as national finance, or the supervision of courts of law, foreign or military affairs, special services of education, health insurance and unemployment.

Will Political Parties survive?

It is obvious that when there is civil war within a country, or international war between sovereign states, the One-Party System with its suppression of incipient revolt or Fifth Column treachery, will and must prevail. Once class conflict between "a nation of the rich and a nation of the poor" within a community or war between sovereign states has ceased to trouble humanity, I see no reason for the survival of political Parties, One, Two or Many, seeking to dominate the whole life of the country on all issues, home and foreign. I foresee a rise of infinite varieties in the grouping of men and women for different but not inconsistent purposes. These associations will include as a matter of course the trade unions and consumers' cooperative movements, collective farms and industrial cooperatives, professional associations with definitely ascertained qualifications for the service of the community such as lawyers, medical men, architects and accountants, and civil servants. There may even be associations of individual producers, preferring a lonely but unregulated life, producing and selling stray articles sufficient for meeting their own personal needs. But besides all these organisations concerned with the production of commodities and services needed for the material progress of a community, there will be organisations for scientific research, for music and acting, for sports and games and heaven knows what else, even for participation in religious rites and ceremonies, in order to live a holy life with the hope of personal immortality or of absorption in the spirit of love at work in the universe. All these bodies will seek to be represented on local councils and the national representative assembly, elected by all the adult inhabitants within a particular area; not in order to fight each other for supremacy in all issues of the nation's home and foreign affairs, but so as to secure the opportunity of contributing their peculiar knowledge, skill, artistic gifts or ethical codes of conduct to the life of the nation. So-called "free thought and free expression by word and by writ" mocks human progress, unless the common people are taught to think and inspired to use this knowledge in the interests of their commonwealth. This will be done by lectures and discussions among their fellow citizens up and down the country; by seeking election to representative assemblies or serving on administrative executives. It is this widespread knowledge of and devotion to the public welfare that is the keynote of Soviet Democracy.

*The Democratic Control of the Instruments of Production,
Distribution and Exchange*

At this point I reach the most distinctive and unique characteristic of Soviet Communism: the democratic control of land and capital. This entails a brief summary of the Marx-Engels interpretation of the

structure and the working of capitalist profit-making—the dominating feature of what is termed “Western Civilisation”.

Karl Marx in his long study of the capitalist profit-making system in Great Britain—the land of its birth—admitted that in its earliest stages it had two outstanding achievements. Through the use of power, mechanisation and mass production carried out by multitudes of weekly wage-earners, the wealth of the nation had been enormously increased. But it had done more than this. By sweeping away the network of feudal obligations between king and barons, the lord and his tenant, and the craftsman and his guild, and by substituting for these outworn ties the individualist creed of free competition with the minimum of state interference, Western Civilisation had secured for the fortunate few who have inherited, or gained, a secure and sufficient livelihood, an absence of restraint in thought, word and act unknown to the mediaeval world. Unfortunately this same capitalist profit-making led to mass destitution, to low wages, long hours, bad housing and insufficient food. In the famous words of Disraeli, it divided Great Britain into “a nation of the rich and a nation of the poor”. The all-powerful governing class of landlords and capitalists had, in fact, refused to multitudes of men, women and children that other and all-important ingredient of personal freedom—the presence of opportunity to live a healthy, happy and cultured life. Even more disastrous to the welfare of the community is the constantly recurring unemployment of millions of men, gradually producing a hard kernel of workless people, mostly young persons, who become, as years pass by, veritable parasites. One evil Marx did not foresee. There would be not only unemployment on a vast scale, but a sinister decline of the birth-rate threatening the survival of our race as a significant factor in human progress. What British socialists failed to realise was the truth of Karl Marx’s prophecy, that with the advent of monopoly capitalism, with its restricted production, and when profits failed, periods of bad trade would not diminish, but would increase in intensity and duration. Thus the landlords and capitalists in the European sovereign states would, in order to use profitably their surplus capital, seek new lands to conquer in Africa and Asia, inhabited by helpless natives, easy to cheat and enslave. This would lead to aggressive imperialism on the part of the Great European Powers. The climax would be world war, which, if not prevented by an international uprising of the proletariat, might destroy Western Civilisation by mutual mass murder and the wholesale destruction of property and lead to a return of brutal barbarism—a forecast which has been dramatically fulfilled. Hence the slogan: “Workers of the world, unite: you have nothing to lose but your chains, and a new world to win”.

But what should be the new world order when the workers were in the seat of power? Karl Marx had suggested a “dictatorship of the proletariat”, to be followed, in some undefined way, by a “classless society”. When fanatical followers argued among themselves what

exactly these phrases meant, and appealed to their leader, Karl Marx is reported to have observed, "I am not a Marxist"—which implied that the future socialist order would have to be determined by the scientific study of future events which could not be foreseen. Lenin discovered, when the Bolsheviks achieved power, that a classless society had to be slowly built up by the deliberate but gradual evolution of a multiform democracy: the organisation of man as a citizen, man as a producer and man as a consumer. Thus the Bolshevik Party, led by Lenin, proceeded to develop a powerful trade union movement, now numbering more than twenty million members, including all the workers, by hand and by brain, employed in state or municipal and consumers' cooperative enterprises; also of the consumers' cooperative movement, to-day numbering over thirty-seven million members, the largest and most active in the world. There remained over the agricultural population, the largest element in Tsarist Russia; consisting of a few great landlords and a minority of well-to-do Kulaks owning agricultural land and employing labour at miserably low wages, in order to make profit by the production and sale of agricultural products, whilst the vast majority were poor peasants, always on the point of famine whether as agricultural labourers or as the owners of tiny plots of land. Lenin did not undertake to solve this problem. He thought that it was impracticable at that stage of development to sweep away the profit-making motive in agriculture. After his death, Stalin and his associates persuaded the All-Union Congress of the Communist Party to adopt, and the Supreme Soviet of the USSR to apply, the principle of the collectivisation of agriculture embodied in associations of self-governing worker-producers. After 1929 thousands of collective farms opened up throughout the Soviet territory, to-day numbering well over two hundred thousand. These collective farms had what has been termed a mixed economy. Unlike the agricultural cooperative societies of Scandinavia and the U.S.A., the members of the collective farms are not profit-making employers of labour, whether in their own farms or in joint factories for the preparation of food products and the selling to the retailers. They are associations of agricultural workers engaged in a common task of cultivating the land for the supply of food, whether vegetable or animal. Nor is personal property excluded from this mixed economy: it is usual for each worker and his family to be allotted a piece of land which they can cultivate for the supply of their own food, the surplus being sold in the neighbouring free market, where they can buy commodities produced in the neighbourhood. These collective farms hold the land on a permanent lease from the government without payment of rent so long as they fulfil their collective obligation to the community. In return for the use of the land they are required to sell to the government a defined amount of the product, for which they are paid fixed prices, selling the surplus in the local market; they also depend on the government for the supply of tractors and often for the skilled mechanics provided by the government local tractor stations.

Any inequality in the fertility of the land held by a particular collective farm, or its access to nearby markets, is remedied by an income tax on the members as a whole, and on the individuals who are selling commodities in the free markets. Thus the government exercises a monetary control over the collective farms.¹

It must be added that for the cultivation of plants and the breeding of animals involving specialised knowledge and scientific research, there are state farms, either belonging to the national or local governments, and administered with the active cooperation of the trade union movement, as is the case in all completely socialised institutions.

Is the USSR a Multiform Democracy?

Now it is important to note that, throughout the development of this multiform democracy, Lenin and Stalin both realised that it was man as a citizen through the political state that had to be the predominant partner, if only because, unlike the organisation of the producers in trade unions or collective farms, or of the consumers in the consumers' cooperative movement, political democracy represents all the inhabitants of a given territory. It is necessary to emphasise this plain and indisputable fact, because the supremacy of the political democracy over industrial democracy not only angers the anarchists, who want to be free of all control, by whomsoever exercised, but upsets those who believe in "workers' control" or the "dictatorship of the proletariat". What is still more surprising is that some avowed believers in political democracy suspect the duly elected deputies of becoming, somehow or other, "dictators" of a peculiarly sinister type. But it is clear that it is only an assembly, representing *all the inhabitants* on its executive, that is entitled, according to democratic principles, to preserve public order by law courts and police, and to defend the country from the aggression of foreign powers, and therefore to maintain an army, navy and air force. Moreover, there is the supply of electricity and pure water, transport by land and water, reclamation of deserts and waterlogged low-lying land turned into mud by slow winding rivers, enterprises which, in sparsely inhabited territories, may not yield profits to the capitalist and will therefore not be undertaken. Even more outstanding are the social services designed to provide for the health and education of all the inhabitants, for scientific research, music, art, even games and sport; in a word, the

¹ This type of organisation—associations of self-governing owner-producers—is also that of specialised workers, such as fishermen and the hunters of fur-producing animals, as well as the handicrafts for the production of specialised articles, and in a few cases of factory and mine workers. These industrial cooperatives or self-governing workshops to-day include over two million workers and show every sign of increasing. Within the capitalist profit-making system they have been a failure in spite of the devoted propaganda of the Christian Socialists in 1840-1860 or the more revolutionary fervour of the Guild Socialists in 1910-1922. The few that have survived are closely connected with and dependent on the consumers' cooperative movement.

culture for a progressive people. All these activities require an income which can only be raised in one of three different ways: (1) taxation of individuals or groups; (2) the surplus value over cost of production yielded by state and municipal enterprises for home consumption; or (3) by foreign trade, exchanging goods which the nation does not require (*i.e.* gold in the USSR) or can make more cheaply for commodities which they do not possess but require for the consumption of their own citizens. Hence the need for the establishment of a planning department (Gosplan), perhaps the most important of all the ministries included in the Council of People's Commissars for the successive Five-Year Plans from 1928 to 1942.

The Constitution of 1936 based on the Rights and Obligations of Man

This elaborate structure, including a declaration of the rights and obligations of the individual citizen, is described and laid down as the law of the land in the Articles of the New Constitution of 1936. This remarkable document ought to be studied by all sociological students. Where it differs from the two historic Declarations of the Rights of Man—the American and the French—at the end of the eighteenth century, is that it insists on the fundamental fact, that without this obligation on the part of all the inhabitants, all the time, to provide security and produce plenty, the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness will be an idle dream for the vast majority of the inhabitants of a given country.

Here are a few of its 134 Articles, in its 13 chapters, which I pick out as defining the structure and activities that I have attempted to summarise. *Article 4* lays down that "The economic foundation of the USSR consists of the socialist economic system and the socialist ownership of the tools and means of production, firmly established as a result of the liquidation of the capitalist economic system, the abolition of private ownership of the tools and means of production, and the abolition of the exploitation of man by man". This does not mean that the state should take over all the means of production, distribution and exchange. *Article 5* insists that "Socialist property in the USSR has either the form of state property (the wealth of the whole people) or the form of cooperative collective property (property of separate collective farms, property of cooperative associations)". *Article 6*, that "The land, its deposits, waters, forests, mills, factories, mines, railways, water and air transport, banks, means of communication, large state-organised enterprises (state farms, machine-tractor stations, etc.), and also the basic housing facilities in cities and industrial localities, are state property, that is the wealth of the whole people". It is interesting to note that this economic democracy does not interfere with private property for personal use, so long as this property is not made the opportunity for exploiting land or labour by profit-making landlords or capitalists. Thus *Article 9*

provides that " Alongside the socialist system of economy, which is the dominant form of economy in the USSR, the law allows small-scale private enterprise of individual peasants and handicraftsmen based on their personal labour, provided there is no exploitation of the labour of others ". Finally *Article 10*, " The right of personal property of citizens in their income from work and in their savings, in their dwelling-house and auxiliary husbandry, in household articles and utensils, and in articles for personal use and comfort, as well as the right of inheritance of personal property of citizens, is protected by law ".

There are other rights which are protected by the New Constitution. For it ensures to every citizen not only protection against aggression and arbitrary arrest, but also the right to have remunerative work ; for the women the right to a specially elaborate provision for motherhood ; for both sexes the right to specified hours of rest and paid weeks of holiday ; the right of education of every kind and grade and at any age ; and, most far-reaching of all, the right to full economic provision, according to need, in all the vicissitudes of life—this formal enactment of such enormously extended " rights of man " is but the explicit consecration in the Constitution of what was throughout the USSR already very largely in operation. Over and above all this elaborate organisation *Article 11* insists that " the economic life of the USSR is determined and directed by a state plan of national economy in the interests of increasing the public wealth, of steadily raising the material and cultural standard of the working people, and of strengthening the independence of the USSR and its capacity for defence ".

Finally, all these rights are complemented by obligations on the part of the individual citizen. *Article 12* enacts that " Work in the USSR is a duty and a ' matter of honour ' for every able-bodied citizen, on the principle ' He who does not work shall not eat ' ". Thus " in the USSR the principle of socialism is realised : ' From each according to his ability, to each according to his work ' ". Once this principle has been acted on the human race can progress to the higher level of communism : " From each according to his faculty and to each according to his need ".

This fundamental transformation of the social order—the substitution of planned production for community consumption, instead of the capitalist profit-making of so-called " Western Civilisation "—seems to me so vital a change for the better, so conducive to the progress of humanity to higher levels of health and happiness, virtue and wisdom, as to constitute a new civilisation. This is not to say that in twenty years the Soviet Union has achieved a condition of plenty as statistically opulent as the richest capitalist nations have reached in the course of several centuries. In spite of a material progress during these twenty years which has probably never been equalled in any other country at any period of its history, the one hundred and eighty million Soviet citizens (excluding the territory regained in 1939–1940) have still an insufficient supply of what seem necessities of civilisation—to name only two, of

bedrooms and baths ! What is really significant in this connection is the economic discovery that this substitution, for profit-making manufacturing, of planned production for community consumption, frees the nation not only from the alternation of booms and slumps, but also, by ensuring a ubiquitous effective demand in the growing population, from the hitherto incessant social malady of involuntary mass unemployment. As to increasing plenty, Soviet Communism has the guarantee not only of a continuous advance of technical science, but also of the psychological discovery by the workers that the planning system eliminates the enemy party in the production, distribution and exchange of commodities and services. The entire net product of the community is, in fact, shared among those who cooperate in its production, in whatever way they themselves decide, without tribute to an hereditary parasitic class. This produces an emotional passion for production among the millions of workers by hand and by brain such as heretofore has only been manifested in other countries by the individual peasant proprietor or the profit-making entrepreneur. In the USSR it is the trade unions that most strongly insist on the utmost use of the labour-saving machinery, and who have developed the famous Stakhanov movement and socialist emulation between the workers of one factory and those of another factory, so as to produce more at a less cost and thus increase the wealth of the nation.

The Communist Party : its Origin

To what group of men can this remarkable transformation in so short a time be attributed ? For it must be recalled that a bare twenty years ago the vast territory of Soviet Russia was a scene of indescribable misery and confusion ; a defeated army with millions killed and wounded ; workers and peasants everywhere in revolt ; famine and epidemics raging through the land. Five Great Powers had invaded, or were invading the country ; first victorious Germany, to grasp more land ; then Great Britain, France and even the U.S.A. to help the White Army to restore the Emperor to his throne ; whilst Japan was in occupation of some of Siberia. No one outside Russia, except a few fanatical communists, believed in the early twenties that Bolshevik Russia could or would survive. To-day, despite violent prejudices against the new social order on the part of capitalist governments and their supporters, all the governments of the world, whether dictatorships or political democracies, are compelled to recognise that the USSR is a Great Power, with a stabilised population of two hundred millions ; a decline of the death-rate and rise of the birth-rate ; no unemployment, and, so many competent investigators think, a steadily rising standard of health, comfort and culture, for the vast population of one-sixth of the earth's surface.

No one denies, whether he admires or abhors the daily life and destiny of the two hundred million inhabitants of the USSR, that it is to the

Communist Party, as created by Lenin and developed by Stalin and his associates, that the credit or discredit of the entire organisation of the Soviet Union belongs. What is the origin and constitution of the Bolshevik Party? What is its living philosophy and what are its activities? And finally, what are its defects, or "infantile diseases", to use Lenin's term, which may or may not be permanent?

The All-Union Party (of Bolsheviks), which to-day is its official title, first appeared in 1898 at Minsk, as the result of a cleavage in the Social Democratic Party of Russia, two separate parties emerging—the Bolshevik, the Majority Party, and the Menshevik, the Minority Party. I need not, in this summary, describe in detail the tangled history of the Communist (Bolshevik) Party of the USSR. The Bolshevik Party led by Plekhanov and afterwards dominated by Lenin, was inspired by the Marxian vision of a world revolution, whilst the Menshevik adhered to the liberal policy of the German Social Democratic Party and the British Labour Party during the first two decades of the twentieth century. Unlike his Russian predecessor, unlike any other party organiser, Lenin had no use, within the Bolshevik Party, for mere sympathisers, for partly converted disciples who were ready to vote for his Party. The Bolshevik Party was not a Party of electors prepared to give their vote for candidates selected by the Party; popular election did not exist in Tsarist Russia. The Party that Lenin forged for his revolutionary activities became, after the seizure of power, the organisation by which alone the revolution, so Lenin believed, would be maintained and directed. To-day it exists, as the student of political science will realise, chiefly as the means by which the people of the USSR, in all their multiform participation in public affairs that we have described, have been supplied with a political, intellectual and legislative *élite* enjoying the confidence of the people by its disinterestedness, its superior training and its practical insight into the needs of the immediate situation, able to guide the people's uncertain state during the first period of its new freedom. Otherwise there would have been no continuous guidance, no persuasion, ubiquitous and consistent, of the hundred and sixty million inhabitants belonging to different races, mostly illiterate, scattered over one-sixth of the earth's surface.

Its Organisation

The elaborate constitution of the Communist Party described in the sixty-paged chapter of *Soviet Communism* is a complicated type of democratic self-government of which I can here give only a mere outline. From first to last there is no mention of an autocratic leader whose will is law. The Communist cell, the basic organisation to be found in every type of association, industrial and agricultural, scientific and cultural, even associations for games and sport, elects deputies to local conferences of the Party, and from these conferences deputies are appointed to the congress of the Party of each constituent republic or autonomous region.

and from thence to the supreme authority of the Party—the All-Union Congress of the Communist Party meeting at Moscow. So far as its internal constitution is concerned, it is a democratic organisation, similar to the recognised professions in Great Britain of medical men and surgeons, of barristers and solicitors, and it admits new members after examination to test their capacity to practise the vocation concerned. Where it differs from these professional organisations is in the rigour and all-inclusiveness of the conditions imposed on the members, and in the variety and importance of its activities.

“ Puritan ” Ethics

What, for instance, is the code of conduct for the individual member ? Here I may note that there is a stop in the mind of former Bohemian admirers of the Bolshevik revolution of 1917–1922 regarding what seems to them a terrifying resurrection of what they call “ puritan ethics ”. Within the Communist Party and among the five million Comsomols (the organisation of youth) sexual promiscuity, like all forms of self-indulgence, has come to be definitely thought contrary to communist ethics, on the grounds enumerated by Lenin : “ it is a frequent cause of disease ; it impairs the productivity of labour ; it is disturbing to accurate judgment and inimical to intellectual acquisition and scientific discovery, besides frequently involving cruelty to individual sufferers ”. This insistence on self-restraint, in all cases where the health and happiness not only of the individual person but also of the community are at risk, accounts for the penalisation of homosexuality and for the limitation of abortion to cases in which the life of the child-bearing mother is threatened—reforms which are violently denounced by some of the more anarchic of Soviet critics. Most reactionary of all, from the standpoint of the libertarian, is the outspoken approval of the lifelong attachment of husband and wife as the most appropriate setting under communism for family life.

Thus the test of membership of the Communist Party is fundamentally that of acceptance of an ideology relating to man in his relation to man, and man's relation to the universe, from which is evolved an exceptionally strict code of conduct, not imposed on the ordinary citizen, a code which all members must carry out, the sanction being reprimand, or, if obdurate, expulsion from membership. It has even added, in its new category of “ sympathisers ”, something analogous to the “ lay brothers ” of the religious orders. In fact, in the nature of its mentality, as in the code of personal conduct, the Communist Party resembles more a religious order than the organisation of the learned professions of Western Europe, such as those of lawyers and doctors, engineers and public accountants.

The Education of the People

Can I sum up the purpose—the vocation of the Communist Party of two million five hundred thousand members, reinforced by five million

Comsomols, who are at work in the USSR to-day? They constitute, it is said, the vanguard of the proletariat, or, varying the metaphor, the spearhead of its activity, in the maintenance of the Bolshevik revolution and the building-up of the state. But what does this mean in practice? At all times more than half the Party membership continues at its manual labour in the factory or the mine, in the oilfields or at the hydro-electric plants, on the farms or in the railway or postal services, they serve in the armed forces on land, sea and in the air, with the mercantile marine or the river-transport vessels. The specific Party duty is so to lead their working lives as to be perpetually influencing the conduct of all their fellow citizens among whom they work. They must set themselves to be the most zealous, the most assiduous, the most efficient workers of their several establishments. They must neglect no opportunity of raising their own qualifications and increasing their technical skill. They must make themselves the leaders among the wage-earners, employing every means of educating the non-Party mass in communist doctrines and soviet policy. In the meetings of the trade union and the consumers' cooperative society, as in the manufacturing artel and the collective farm, they must, in concert with their comrades in the concern, constantly take an active part, using their influence to guide the whole membership towards the most complete fulfilment of the function of the organisation in the socialist state, along the lines from time to time authoritatively prescribed by the All-Union Congress held at Moscow and addressed by the Party leaders, of whom, as I have before stated, Stalin exercises the greatest influence.

The Living Philosophy of Soviet Communism

But there is another factor in Soviet Communism, setting it in contrast with the civilisation of the western world. It is based on an intellectual unity throughout all its activities; it definitely rejects every remnant of the superstition and magic which the twentieth-century man in the capitalist democracies retains in his conception of the universe and of man's place in it. That is to say, Soviet Communism has a new ideology as well as a new economics. Soviet Communism puts no limit to the growth of man's knowledge. It counts, in fact, on a vast and unfathomable advance of science in every field, but it refuses to accept as knowledge, or as the basis of its code of conduct, any of the merely traditional beliefs and postulates about man and the universe for which no rational foundation can be found, or any of the purely subjective imaginings of the metaphysician or the theologian. It excludes, and dogmatically excludes, the supernatural, whether this takes the form of the primitive belief in good and evil spirits, or the more civilised reliance on a one omnipotent God (whether or not opposed by a Devil) involving the immortality of all human beings, each individual being destined for Heaven, Purgatory or Hell. This new living philosophy, termed scientific humanism, is working out the ethics of a new civilisation arising from its own experience of social

life. And in that pragmatic evolution of a code of conduct based essentially upon the hygiene of the individual and of the social organism of which he forms part, Soviet Communism is assisted by the essential unity in principle of its economics and its ethics. Under Soviet Communism, with its planned production for community consumption, the pecuniary gain to the profit-making entrepreneur, nicknamed the "Economic Calculus", the free working of which is the be-all and end-all of capitalist civilisation, is deemed an undesirable guide to action, whether public or private.

Scientific Humanism

To quote the last words of the last book of the Webb partnership, in the postscript to the second edition : "The dominant motive in everyone's life must be not pecuniary gain to anyone but the welfare of the human race, now and for all time. For it is clear that everyone starting adult life is in debt to the community in which he has been born and bred, cared for, fed and clothed, educated and entertained. Anyone who, to the extent of his ability, does less than his share of work, and takes a full share of the wealth produced in the community, is a thief, and should be dealt with as such. That is to say, he should be compulsorily reformed in body and mind so that he may become a useful and happy citizen. On the other hand, those who do more than their share of the work that is useful to the community, who invent or explore, who excel in the arts or crafts, who are able and devoted leaders in production or administration, are not only provided with every pecuniary or other facility for pursuing their chosen careers, but are also honoured as heroes and publicly proclaimed as patterns and benefactors. The ancient axiom of 'Love your neighbour as yourself' is embodied, not in the economic but in the utilitarian calculus, namely, the valuation of what conduces to the permanent well-being of the human race. Thus in the USSR there is no distinction between the code professed on Sundays and that practised on week-days. The citizen acts in his factory or farm according to the same scale of moral and ethical values as he does to his family, in his sports, or in his voting at elections. The secular and the religious are one. The only good life at which he aims is a life that is good for all his fellow men, irrespective of age or sex, religion or race."

The Infantile Diseases of Soviet Communism

At last I come to the question : What have been the disreputable features, the infantile diseases, to use the Leninist term, of the new social order during the twenty years of its existence ? Or, to put the question more bluntly : What exactly is the indictment of Soviet Communism on the part of those who insist that it is a step backward in human progress and therefore should be opposed by the capitalist democracies ?

There is, of course, the complete pacifist who objects to the use of

physical force, whether to upset a cruel tyrant at home or to repel a foreign power bent on new lands to conquer—a living philosophy and code of conduct which neither I nor the vast majority of the critics of Soviet Communism regard either as practicable or desirable as the way of promoting the welfare of mankind. I will therefore pass it by as irrelevant to the purpose of this introduction.¹

The Treason Trials

Let us take the first objection. During the three or four years from the autumn of 1917 to 1922, the Bolshevik Government had established itself in Moscow and had succeeded in repelling the German, British, French, American and Japanese invasion, of that part of the territory of Tsarist Russia which the Bolsheviks thought themselves capable of defending. For some time after they had made a formal peace with their recent enemies they were confronted not only by local rebellions but by continuous and extensive underground sabotage in the newly established plants and factories, mines and means of communication, workers' flats and hospitals, by the remnant of the upholders of the old tsarist régime, all of which had to be summarily suppressed. But this obviously necessary use of force was not the only task awaiting the revolutionary government. History proves that in all violent revolutions, those who combine to destroy an old social order seldom agree as to what exactly should be the political and economic pattern of the new social organisation to be built up to replace it. Even our own limited revolution of 1689 in Great Britain, whereby a Protestant king by Parliamentary statute was substituted for a Catholic king by Divine Right, was followed, for nearly a hundred years, by generation after generation of conspirators to whom treason and rebellion, spying and deceit, with or without the connivance of a foreign power, were only part of what they deemed to be a rightful effort to overturn an even worse state of home and foreign affairs than they had joined as rebels to destroy. Thus, when we published the second edition of *Soviet Communism* in 1937, the outstanding scandal, so hostile critics of the Soviet Union declared, were the Treason Trials² which took place in the thirties, not only of old Bolshevik comrades of Lenin and opponents of Stalin's subsequent policy, but also of the best known commanding officers of the Red Army, many of whom had been tsarist generals, transferring their allegiance to the Bolshevik Government

¹ Those readers who are complete pacifists may be interested in an article by me in *I Believe* (a volume of essays by twenty-three eminent men and women published by George Allen and Unwin, pp. 337-338), where I give my reasons for rejecting the assertion "that all wars are wrong".

² In the American Ambassador Davies' remarkable book *My Mission to Moscow* he declares that these Treason Trials were justified by the police in the USSR, and not only of Quisling's intriguing with the enemies of Moscow, like Yagoda or the GPU of the generals, but also in respect of honourable men who were bent on securing, by underhand means, the defeat of Stalin's policy of the collectivism of agriculture and other social reforms started in 1933-1937. See pp. 129-138.

in order to defend their native land from invasion by German, British, American, French and Japanese armies ; but who, it was alleged and I think proved, had begun to intrigue with the German Army against the new social order of the Soviet Union. The most important of these conspiracies was the Trotsky movement against the policy of building up socialism in one country as impracticable and insisting that the Bolshevik Party should abide by what was held to be the Marx-Lenin policy of promoting proletarian revolutions throughout the world. The success of the Soviet Government in instituting not only a political but an industrial democracy, and thereby enormously increasing the health, wealth and culture of the inhabitants, and the consequent recognition of the USSR as a Great Power, discredited the Trotsky movement, which I think was finally liquidated by the murder of Trotsky in Meixco by one of his own followers. To-day, and for some time, there has been no sign of conspiracies or faked conspiracies within the Soviet Union. The fear of German invasion and the consequent dominance of the Nazi system of racial oppression has made clear to all the *bona fide* citizens of the USSR the overwhelming desirability of keeping out of world war as long as possible, meanwhile devoting their energies to increasing their means of livelihood and their defensive power ; whilst the capitalist democracies and Axis powers were engaged in mutual mass murder and the destruction of property. When the German attack plunged Russia into war it was immediately apparent that the inhabitants of the USSR, whether soldiers or civilians, men, women and young people, were so convinced of the benefits yielded to the Socialist Fatherland that they resisted not only with reckless courage, but with considerable skill and ingenuity, the powerful onslaught of the highly mechanised German army hitherto victorious conquerors of one country after another.

There are, however, features in Soviet Communism which are either wholly absent in Great Britain, the self-governing Dominions and the U.S.A., or are far less virulent and permanent than they seem to be in the Soviet Union of to-day.

The Idolisation of the Leader

The first of these is the idolisation of one individual as an infallible leader who must be revered and obeyed and not criticised. This idolisation was seen in the popular elevation of Lenin, notably after his death, to the status of saint or prophet, virtually canonised in the sleeping figure in the mausoleum in Moscow's Red Square, where he was, to all intents and purposes, worshipped by the adoring multitude of workers and peasants who daily pass before him. After Lenin's death it was agreed that his place could never be filled. Some new personality had to be produced for the hundred and sixty million inhabitants of the USSR, most of whom were illiterate, deplorably superstitious and incapable of grasping the new philosophy of the Communist Party. Among the leaders

of the Communist Party there ensued a tacit understanding that Stalin should be "boosted" as the supreme leader of the proletariat, the Party and the state. His portrait and his bust were accordingly distributed by tens of thousands. But this idolisation of Stalin has largely ceased to exist in the Soviet Union of to-day. In the village, municipal and union soviets, local heroes are held up for the admiration of and imitation by the people; heroes of the workshop and of the field, heroes of research and exploration, ordinary people whose heroism consists not in an isolated courageous act under the stress of emotion, but in outstanding continuous application of courage and intelligence, initiative and self-discipline. The portraits of these heroes and heroines are to be seen everywhere. Moreover, Stalin's recent step down from the pedestal of the Holy Father of the Communist Party to the prosaic position of Prime Minister, elected strictly according to the constitutional procedure of a political democracy, has, so to speak, secularised his status and made it that of any other Prime Minister ultimately dependent on the votes of the people. When Stalin disappears from the scene will he have a successor as an idolised figure? I doubt it. The very conception of an infallible or a mysteriously inspired leader is wholly inconsistent with the Marx-Lenin materialist interpretation of history. Lenin would have mocked at his idolised figure in the mausoleum in the Red Square of Moscow. Stalin has never claimed to be more than the duly appointed official of the Communist Party and the democratically elected member of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. Hence, I believe this infantile disease will die out with the spread of education among the multitude and the practice of the scientific method in all branches of human activities. With a more enlightened electorate and the emergence of men with specialised talents I foresee that the influence now exercised by Stalin will be inherited by a group of prominent members of the Communist Party, of its All-Union Congress, qualified to stand for the central committee and its subordinate councils. This group who happen to become the recognised leaders of the party will grow larger and more diversified with the development of new scientific technique in all departments of government, alike in Moscow and in its constituent republics.

The Disease of Orthodoxy

Far more repugnant to our western political habits is the absolute prohibition within the USSR of any propaganda advocating the return to capitalist profit-making or even to any independent thinking on the fundamental social issues about possible new ways of organising men in society, new forms of social activity, and new development of the socially established code of conduct. It is upon this power to think new thoughts, and to formulate even the most unexpected fresh ideas, that the future progress of mankind depends. This disease of orthodoxy in a milder form is not wholly absent in the capitalist political democracies. No one suggests that Switzerland is not a political democracy, and yet, as I have

already noted, members of the Society of Jesus are not only refused citizenship but are actually banished from their native land, a penalisation which has been extended of late years to the members of the Third International, assuredly a strangely discordant couple to be linked together in the dock of Swiss Courts of Justice accused of the propaganda of living philosophy incompatible with the public safety. Likewise the U.S.A., in some of the constituent States, through the device of Primaries, has excluded the Communist Party, and to-day even the Socialist Party, from selecting the candidates for election to the legislature of those states; while in one or two states being a member of the Communist Party is punished by penal servitude. In Oklahoma City, we are told in the *New York Nation*, December 28, 1940, "mere membership in the Communist Party is regarded as a crime punishable by imprisonment for ten years and a fine of 5000 dollars. This vindictive sentence was passed on Robert Wood, state secretary of the Party, in October, and has now been repeated in the case of Alan Shaw, twenty-two-year-old secretary of the Oklahoma City Local. In neither case was any overt act charged. Both men were convicted of violating the state criminal syndicalism law on evidence consisting of selected passages from the works of Marx, Lenin and Stalin. Since the ideas put forward in these books were those of Communist leaders, it was charged, they must also be subscribed to by the accused. . . ."

Whenever a country is threatened with foreign invasion or revolutionary upheaval, the suppression of sects advocating disobedience to the law, sabotage or giving information to the enemy is a necessary use of force on the part of a government, however democratically representative of the majority of the inhabitants it may be. Have we not imprisoned two M.P.s and a distinguished ex-Cabinet Minister, and some thousand other fellow citizens? Have we not interned thousands of well-conducted and even distinguished foreigners because they were suspected of a like antagonism to our existing social order? Have we not blamed the tolerance of Norway, the Netherlands and Belgium towards what is termed Fifth Column activities, *i.e.* propaganda by its own citizens of the Nazi system as an alternative to their own type of government?

It is not surprising, therefore, that there should have been intolerance, on the part of the Soviet Government, towards free thought and expression, by word and by writ, of antagonism to its home and foreign policy. How does this intolerance differ in character from the intolerance manifested in Great Britain? As we have already described (p. xxvii), free criticism, however hostile it may be, is permitted, even encouraged, in the USSR, of the directors of all forms of enterprise, by the workers employed, or by the consumers of the commodities or services concerned. In Great Britain no such detailed and personal criticism by the workers employed, or by the consumers of commodities and services concerned, is tolerated by capitalist profit-makers when they close down works or charge monopoly prices, or even if they go bankrupt through inefficiency or fraudulent practice. Moreover, when anxious to encourage historical research, the

Soviet Government is singularly open-minded and has just published a translation of the complete works of Ricardo into Russian, which is exactly as if the British Government were to issue from the Stationery Office a translation into English of the complete works of Marx, Engels and Lenin.

There is, however, a type of suppression of free thought by word and by writ that is absent from capitalist democracies but is indisputably present in the USSR. No criticism of the living philosophy of the Communist Party is permitted in the Soviet Union. It would, for instance, be impossible to issue a stream of pamphlets against Soviet Communism and in favour of the capitalist system, such as the Fabian Tracts for Socialists, or the works of G. D. H. Cole and Harold Laski, criticising capitalism and suggesting various forms of socialist organisation; it would be still more impossible to publish a condemnation of Soviet Communism such as the Webbs' *The Decay of Capitalist Civilisation*. Nor would there be permitted in the USSR newspapers and periodicals as favourable to profit-making capitalism as the *Daily Herald*, the weekly *Tribune* or the monthly *Left Book News* (leave alone the *Labour Monthly*) are to the various types of socialism. I venture to prophesy that this form of intolerance—which we term the disease of orthodoxy—will prove to be merely the growing pains of a new social order which has struggled into existence in a hostile world. I may note, in passing, that owing to the increasing urgency of war, our Home Secretary has banned, for the last fourteen months, one daily paper—the *Daily Worker*—and has threatened another—the *Daily Mirror*—with a like fate. I see no reason to doubt that with the increased prosperity of the Soviet Union, at peace with the world, the Communist Party of the USSR, whose living philosophy depends for its realisation on the scientific method, will gradually lift the bar to free discussion in the press about rival conceptions of political and economic systems, if only to increase the prestige of the new civilisation among the intelligentsia of other countries, and, be it added, to gratify the passion for discussion, day in and day out, of every conceivable issue, practical and theoretical, which distinguishes the Russian Slav, the majority race of the USSR.

The Comintern or Third International

At first sight the least important, but in many ways the most injurious feature of the internal structure of the Soviet Union, exciting the enmity of the British and other Capitalist Democracies, are the highly organised Communist Parties whose policy is dominated by the Comintern in Moscow, presided over by Dimitrov, the Bulgarian socialist rendered famous by his courageous and successful defence during the celebrated Berlin trial springing out of the burning of the Reichstag in 1933. These Communist Parties within the territories of the Allied Governments, have pursued what has been termed a "contortionist"¹ policy, in order to

¹ See the angry pamphlet issued by the Labour Party Publication Department, Transport House, April 1940: *Stalin's Men—"About Turn"*. A more elaborate and

serve the national interests, not of their own country, but of the USSR. In the first stages of the Allies' war with Germany, during the period of the German Soviet Pact of 1939, they denounced the war as an "imperialist war, wholly in the interest of the ruling capitalist and landlord classes of Great Britain, intent on safeguarding and extending the British Empire with its dominion over the coloured races of Africa and Asia. But directly Hitler's German army marched, without warning, into the USSR, they suddenly turned round and started a campaign for an all-out war against Hitler's barbarous Nazi armed forces. How far Premier Stalin and his colleagues in the Sovnarkom and the Presidium approve of the continued existence of the Third International is unknown. In the two years after Lenin's death, Stalin successfully advocated the policy of building up a multi-form democracy which would eliminate the capitalist and the landlord within the vast territory of the USSR ; and he denounced Trotsky's alternative of organising, in other countries, violent revolutions against the capitalist system. Hence the foreign policy of the Soviet Government has been, throughout the leadership of Stalin, in favour of peace, if possible enforced by the League of Nations, and if that broke down, secured by treaties of non-aggression between the Soviet Union and all other sovereign states, without attempting to interfere with the internal organisation of each other's countries. Persistent rumour suggests that he would like to see the Comintern disappear, but, owing to its foundation by Lenin during the first glorious days of the revolution of 1917, he is not prepared to suppress it.¹

There is however another explanation for the continued existence of a British branch of the Comintern or Third International, and the con-

documented denunciation of this sudden twist-round of the Communist Party, June 22, 1941, is Victor Gollancz's able book, *Russia and Ourselves*. It is notable that neither one nor the other mentions the fact that the Communist Party is by its constitution dependent for its policy on the Comintern at Moscow ; if that ceased to exist, the little group of able men presided over by the distinguished scientist Professor J. B. S. Haldane and the honest and able labour leader Harry Pollitt, as general secretary, could become members of the local Labour Parties or of the Fabian Society, and take an active part in the organisation of a united Labour and Socialist Party.

¹ We are told in the most authoritative history of the Communist Party—*Outline History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, 2 vols., by N. Popov—that (pp. 61-62) "The First, Constituent, Congress of the Communist International was held at the beginning of March 1919. It was attended by delegates from Russia, the Ukraine, Poland, Latvia, Germany, the United States, Norway, Hungary, Switzerland, Finland, Britain and other countries. The central question at the Congress was that of bourgeois democracy and proletarian dictatorship, the report on this question being made by Lenin. In his introductory speech at the opening of the Congress, Lenin said : 'It is only necessary to find that practical form which will enable the proletariat to realise its domination. Such a form is the Soviet system with the proletarian dictatorship. . . .' In Lenin's book *State and Revolution* we are told the purpose of the Comintern—"This victory of the world proletarian revolution calls for the greatest confidence, the closest fraternal union and the greatest possible unity of revolutionary action on the part of the working class in progressive countries. These conditions cannot be achieved unless a determined rupture is made on matters of principle, and a ruthless struggle is waged against the bourgeois distortion of socialism which has gained the upper hand among the leaders of the official Social Democratic and Socialist parties" (p. 63).

tinued clash of this organisation with the Labour and Socialist Parties within the capitalist democracies in which the blame is on the other side. From the very outset of the Bolshevik revolution in the autumn of 1917, the International Federation of Labour and Socialist Parties (known in former years as the Second International) has actually accepted, as representing the Russian people, three hardened counter-revolutionaries, who opposed Lenin and the revolution of 1917, and since then have continued to intrigue against the Soviet Government. It is also a regrettable fact that the International Federation of Trade Unions, representing the Trade Union movement of the capitalist democracies, has refused to accept, as members, representatives of the All-Union Central Committee of Trade Unions (AUCCTU) with its twenty-three million members. It is an odd fact that it is only the International Cooperative Alliance which has from the first to last accepted representatives of the Central Board of the Centrosoyus with its thirty-seven million members.¹ Let us hope that Sir Walter Citrine by his wise recognition, on terms of equality and warm friendship, of the All-Union Central Committee of the Trade Unions of the USSR, will remedy this disastrous situation within the trade union world and that henceforth the Red trade unions will be represented by Russian trade unionists in the International Federation of Trade Unions. If so, we may hope that the International Federation of Labour and Socialist Parties will follow suit and that the Third International and Second International will be thus merged in one organisation aiming at a new social order within their own countries as well as permanent peace among all the nations of the world.

Britain and Russia : Social Reconstruction at Home

One more question. Why have I exhausted the dwindling strength of an Over-Eighty in arguing that Stalin is not a dictator, whose word is law, like Hitler is, and Mussolini tried to be ; that the USSR is not only a fully fledged political democracy, but also an industrial democracy, with a powerful trade union and consumers' cooperative movement, with a newly invented type of associations of owner-producers in the collective farms and industrial cooperatives, all alike under the control of the central and local government of a representative democracy, without distinction of sex, class or race ? And finally, that through planned production for community consumption, and the elimination of the profit-making motive, the Soviet Union has, in the short space of twenty years, increased the

¹ This " odd fact " is explained by the similarity in constitution and activities of the Consumers' Cooperative Movement in the Soviet Union and in capitalist countries ; whereas there is a striking difference (as will be understood by readers of the foregoing pages) between the constitution and activities of the Trade Union Movement within Capitalist Democracies, compared to the multiform democracy of the Soviet Union. This disparity of aim is even more true in the case of the Labour and Socialist Parties in capitalist countries, compared with the activities of the Communist Party in the USSR, with its planned production for community consumption as the accepted economic structure.

opportunity for life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness for the vast majority of its near two hundred million inhabitants, scattered over one-sixth of the earth's surface?

I started this task with the approval and help of my life partner (also an Over-Eighty) because we thought it desirable that all those who are sincere in their avowed intention of creating a new social order within their own country, designed to eliminate the poverty in the midst of plenty, characteristic of the wealthiest and the most powerful of the capitalist democracies—the United Kingdom and the United States of America—should study the internal organisation of the USSR so as to avoid its mistakes and learn from its successful experiments. Owing to Great Britain's unified and stabilised population and unwritten constitution which permits every possible alteration, the establishment of this new social order need not involve a violent upheaval against a despotic and corrupt government, as it did in tsarist Russia. Thus the British people will be able to avoid the crudities and cruelties inherent in a sudden and violent revolution, rendered more ruthless by the intervention of foreign powers in favour of the old tsarist régime. On the other hand, in order to carry out this social reconstruction, without undue delay, it will be desirable to study the bolder experiments practicable in the USSR owing to the fact that the revolutionary government swept away the remnants of the old social order and therefore had a clear field for experiments, deliberately devised, to carry out their new living philosophy of scientific humanism. We may discover that many of the newly formed institutions are not contrary to the living philosophy of the Christian religion which the political leaders of the capitalist democracies assure us is the foundation-stone of our own civilisation, but are actually more in accordance with the precept of "love thy neighbour as thyself" than the root impulse of profit-making enterprise, "each man for himself and devil take the hindmost".

Cooperation for a New World Order

But this peaceful establishment of an equitable humane social order has ceased to be the main purpose of this essay. The vital issues confronting the British people are, first to win the war and then to win a permanent peace. It is obvious that the heroic resistance, over a battle-front of 1500 miles, put up not only by the Red Army and Air Force, followed by a successful offensive, but also by civilians, men, women and children, is helping us to win the war in a shorter time than was practicable before Great Britain's all-out alliance with the USSR. What seems crystal clear, even if we beat Germany to her knees and occupy her territory and emancipate the conquered peoples, we shall not secure a permanent peace without the whole-hearted consent of the USSR. In order to obtain this cooperation in setting up a new League of Nations for the prevention of aggression, we must treat the government and people of Soviet Russia as equals, without any reserve arising from the deep-seated antagonism

of our ruling class to the internal organisation of the socialist fatherland. For it is difficult to deny that during the period between the two world wars the ruling class of Great Britain was hostile to the continuance of Soviet Communism even within the land of its birth. In the remarkable book *Ambassador Dodds' Diary*—published after his death—there is documentary evidence that the governments of Great Britain and the U.S.A. were, through their diplomatic representatives, official and unofficial, trying to turn Hitler's aggressive "intuitions" away from their sea-bound frontiers towards the common enemy of Hitler's Germany and the capitalist democracies of the U.S.A. and the British Commonwealth of Nations—the Soviet Union. This would mean that Germany would have secured the enormous resources of oil, minerals and foodstuffs in the Ukraine and the Caucasus, and might have been able to defeat the superior man-power of the USSR with its one hundred and eighty million inhabitants.

To-day the scene has changed. Our great Prime Minister Churchill has secured national unity by the reorganisation of his Cabinet on the basis of close collaboration with the Soviet Union in decisively beating Hitler's army in the west, recapturing the Baltic Provinces, with a possible joint occupation of Berlin by the Allied armies. When this has been accomplished the four Great Powers—the United States of America, Great Britain, the Soviet Union and the heroic Chinese represented by Kai-shek—can render Japan powerless by bombing her cities and munition factories from the Siberian airfields and invading with armed forces Manchuria, and thus collaborating in throwing Japanese armies out of China.

This new outlook entails abandoning the hostile attitude of some sections of our ruling class towards the internal structure of the new social order established in the USSR. For if we fail to treat her on terms of equality as a democratic and freedom-loving people, how can we win the war against Hitler's barbaric hordes intent on world domination, and reconstruct on a democratic basis the devastated states of Denmark and Norway, of the Netherlands and Belgium, of Poland, Czechoslovakia and Jugoslavia, and above all, of the downcast and humiliated inhabitants of the great historic Republic of France. The recent treacherous assault of Japan on the U.S.A. and the British Commonwealth of Nations, and the preliminary victories of the Japanese air force in Malaya, the Philippines and the Dutch East Indies, is another instance of the urgent need of an all-out cooperation with the USSR, with our other ally China, against the barbarous Axis Powers. Whether we like it or not, it seems that, owing to the closeness of her lengthy frontiers, in the west and in the east, to Germany and Japan, the Soviet Union will become the paramount military Power in winning complete victory for the Allies. "The whole civilised world", said the late British Ambassador to Moscow—Sir Stafford Cripps—in his farewell message to the Soviet people, "proclaims your victories, and we, your allies, are proud to count ourselves as such. But

the end is not yet. The power of the Nazis is shaken but not broken. . . . When victory comes, of which we are so confident, our two nations will have the privilege of leading the peoples of Europe towards a civilisation of sanity and cooperation. Together we must march forward to that victory. Together we must work and plan to bring about the happier life which their sufferings and their patience have earned for the masses of humanity. . . .”

B. W.

Feb. 1942

PART I

THE CONSTITUTION

"By constitution we mean, whenever we speak with propriety and exactness, that assemblage of laws, institutions and customs, derived from certain fixed principles of reason . . . that compose the general system according to which the community has agreed to be governed."

HENRY ST. JOHN, first Viscount Bolingbroke,
Dissertation on Parties, 1733, p. 108

CHAPTER I

THE CONSTITUTION AS A WHOLE

THE constitution of the Soviet Union differs, we think, from any adopted elsewhere during the past couple of centuries, in not having been the outcome of deliberate and usually prolonged study by political philosophers and jurists. At no time was there anything in the nature of deliberation by a constituent assembly. There was no formulated outline or plan either of the constitution as a whole, or of the relation between its several parts. Even its most prominent feature—the broad base of innumerable local elected councils universally known as soviets—was adopted, as we shall describe in the following chapter, without this having been thought of as the permanent base of a stable government eighteen months before. It is, in fact, one of the difficulties of intelligibly describing this continuously evolving constitution that, whilst it is nowhere given as a whole, in any statute or official document, no part of it can be properly understood without having in mind all the rest. Thus, in the Soviet Union, what the western jurist is tempted to regard as the constitutional structure, namely, the pyramid of soviets, is plainly only a fragment of it, and, as some may say, not the most important fragment. Whether by statutory enactment or by accepted practice, the constitution of the USSR provides for the active participation of the people in the work of government in more than one way. It is therefore not only man as a citizen who is represented. He acts and votes separately in his capacity as a producer. Yet again, as a consumer, he also acts and votes separately. And, so far as concerns the millions who are members of the exclusive and highly disciplined Order of Companionship styled the Communist Party, which undertakes the vocation of public leadership, we find these citizens acting and voting also in a fourth capacity, which may be thought to be the most influential of all. Thus, in dealing with the structure of the USSR, we must cast off, wholly and permanently, the obsolete idea that the constitution of a nation is to be looked for exclusively in some legislative enactment, or other authoritative docu-

ment. We know now that in no nation, not even in the United States, is the whole constitution to be found in any document; just as in no nation, not even in the United Kingdom, is the constitution wholly unwritten. Whether or not we choose to say, with Ferdinand Lassalle, that "the real constitution" of any country is nothing more than "the actual relationships of power", we must, at any rate, always include, as part of the working constitution, everything that operates as such. Moreover, in the USSR, we must accept, once for all, the fact that no distinction is made between the exercise of power that elsewhere would be called legislation, and that which would be deemed executive action or administration. Every organ of administration in the USSR is capable of legislative and of executive action. Every one of them is free to act, within its own area and for all who find themselves within that area, very much as thinks fit, so long as it does not actually contravene any action or decision by a superior authority. But, equally, every one of them can be peremptorily restrained, and may have its action vetoed and cancelled, by any organ occupying a superior place in the hierarchy.

Can we venture on a brief summary of this elusive constitution before embarking on the description of its various parts? Such a sketch, whilst possibly suggesting more questions than it answers, may help the reader to understand the necessarily detailed pages that are to follow. As we see it, the government centred in the Moscow Kremlin is the apex of half a dozen pyramidal structures covering the whole of the USSR, each of them based, according to a common pattern, upon a vast number of relatively small meetings of associated citizens for almost continuous discussion, and for the periodical direct election of primary representative councils. Each of these structures rises tier after tier, through successive stages of councils, governing ever-widening areas and constituted by indirect election, up to a group which is supreme for each particular mass. These half a dozen culminating groups, in different combinations, and by more or less formal joint consultations, constitute the source of all governmental authority, whether legislative or executive.

What are these half a dozen pyramidal structures? There is first the hierarchy¹ of soviets, from those of the village and the city, through the district (rayon) and province (oblast) and constituent republic congresses or conferences, up to the All-Union Congress of Soviets of the USSR, with

¹ Our use of the term "hierarchy" must not be misunderstood. No doubt the earliest usage, many centuries ago, was to employ this word with a theological implication, relating to the "heavenly host"; or to this or that form of church establishment or priestly order. In English usage the term long ago came to be applied to non-theological organisations, but often with an implication of formation and control from the top. The use of the term in modern logic, or in contemporary science, now implies no necessary ascendancy or pre-eminence, any more than any theological reference, but merely "a body of persons or things ranked in grades, orders or classes, one above another"; or "a system or series of terms of successive rank (as classes, orders, genera, species, etc.) used in classification" (*New English Dictionary*). It is in this purely neutral sense of classification, implying neither dictatorship nor popular election, that we use the term in this book.

its Central Executive Committee (TSIK) and its Council of People's Commissars (Sovnarkom). In this hierarchy of soviets it is the citizen as such who is represented. But all citizens are assumed to be also producers by hand or by brain, or the non-able-bodied dependants thereof. A large and rapidly increasing proportion of them are actually wage or salary earners and members of their trade unions. All the producers thus paid are represented in the trade union hierarchy, equally based on innumerable small local workshop or office meetings of the members of each of the trade unions—now 154 in number—electing representative councils which rise, tier upon tier, up to separate central bodies for each of the several unions, and, yet further, to a supreme common assembly, the All-Union Congress of Trade Unions, acting for the whole aggregate of wage or salary recipients engaged in production or distribution of goods or services, by hand or by brain.

There are, however, other producers who are not remunerated by wages or salaries but are themselves owners, wholly or in part, individually or jointly, of the instruments with which they work, and of the product of their labour. Of these owner-producers, as such excluded from the trade unions, there are now several classes, among which two stand out as the principal. These two classes, numbering together more than half the active producers in the USSR, may be thought to be developing constitutionally into massive pyramidal structures parallel with those of the trade unions and the soviets, and formed on a similar pattern. Thus, there are the millions of *kustar* workers, joined in *artels*, now constituted as industrial cooperative societies of owner-producers (*incops*) which elect their own tiers of councils for districts and provinces, culminating in a central delegate body at Moscow. There are equally the millions of members of collective farms (*kolkhosi*, as distinguished from state farms or *sovkhosi*), the federal constitution of which is still only in germ, although it is already more developed in other instances, notably in the corresponding organisation of professional fishermen.

All these producers, whether they work for wages or salary, or as partners sharing a joint product, have, however, in common, not only their citizenship, acting through the hierarchy of soviets, together with their function of production, organised partly in the hierarchy of trade unions, and partly in the several hierarchies of associations of owner-producers, but also a separate and quite distinct interest as consumers. Accordingly practically the whole of them—in 1935 fifty millions of adults—are united in the 45,000 country consumers' cooperative societies in each of which the membership elects its own board of management, whilst the societies are all united in district and provincial and republic associations, formed on substantially the common pattern of indirect election, and culminating in the Central Board of *Centrosoyus*, specifically representing the whole body of consumers throughout the USSR.

Finally, there is the remarkable Companionship or Order, termed the Communist Party, whose three million adult members and candidates,

supported by its still larger junior organisations of Little Octobrists, Pioneers and Comsomols, are not abstracted from the several masses of citizen producers and consumers, but, on the contrary, whilst remaining citizens, assume the function and the duty, not merely, in so far as they are elected or appointed to office, of serving the community as its principal administrators, but also, in working at the bench or in the mine, of continuously educating, inspiring, guiding and leading the whole people among whom they live and work. It is interesting to find the internal organisation of this Companionship or Order following the common pattern running through all the rest of the constitution, with its base in the members' meetings of the 130,000 primary organs, and its tier upon tier of district and provincial and republic councils formed by indirect election, up to the supreme All-Union Congress of the Party, electing its Central Committee, which acts through its Politbureau, and its Orgbureau, and the extensive secretariat that it appoints.

What are not publicly formulated are the arrangements for the constantly shifting consultations and conferences which are perpetually taking place, not only, at each tier, between the intermediate councils and officials, but also between the several supreme bodies centred in Moscow and among their prominent leaders.¹ It is from these consultations and conferences that emanate the streams of orders and "directives" required for the government of so vast a country. The power needed for administration may be generated in the innumerable meetings of electors, producers, consumers and members of the Communist Party, which everywhere form the base of the constitutional structure. It is transmitted through the tiers of councils as by a mighty conducting cable, working, as it passes, the machinery of government in village and city, district (rayon) and province (oblast) and republic. It is this conception of an upward stream of continuously generated power, through multiform mass organisation, to be transformed at the apex into a downward stream of authoritative laws and decrees and "directives", that is indicated by its inventors by the term "democratic centralism".

If we had to name the principal distinguishing feature in this complicated constitution, unlike any other known to political science, we should say its all-pervading multiformity. This was more than once claimed by Lenin as one of the principal merits of Soviet Communism. The very multiformity of the soviet administration, he said, "is a guarantee of vitality: it is a pledge that the common and single aim will be successfully fulfilled. The more varied, the better and the richer be the common

¹ Does not a similar "blind spot" exist in the visions of other constitutions given by the political scientists? It is never easy to evaluate, in one generation after another, the transient mouldings of the constitutional structure represented by the constantly shifting private consultations between different ministers, different departments and different administrative officials; not only with each other, but also with the Bank of England and the powerful associations of capitalist employers, representing, as they claim, all industry and commerce; and, even if only formally, with the leaders of the Trade Union and Cooperative Movements.

experience, the truer and swifter will be the achievements of socialism, the easier will be the practical work, and only practical work will be able to evolve the best methods and means of struggle.”¹

What is the cause or the explanation of this multiformity? The answer is that the working constitution of the USSR has necessarily to cover a much greater proportion of human life than that of any capitalist state, where so much is left to competitive profit-making. This all-inclusiveness was indicated in the “Declaration of the Rights of the Labouring and Exploited Peoples”, drafted by Lenin himself,² with which the Fundamental Law of July 10, 1918, opened. This declaration announced that—

“1. Russia is declared a republic of soviets of workers, soldiers and peasants’ deputies. All central and local authority is vested in these soviets.

“2. The Russian Soviet Republic is established on the basis of a free union of free nations, as a federation of national soviet republics.

“3. Within the fundamental aim of suppressing all exploitation of man by man, of abolishing for ever the division of society into classes, of ruthlessly suppressing all exploiters, of bringing about the socialist organisation of society and the triumph of socialism in all countries, the Third All-Russian Congress of Soviets of workers, soldiers and peasants’ deputies further decrees:

“(a) In order to establish the socialisation of land, private ownership of land is abolished; all land is declared national property and is handed over to the labouring masses, without compensation, on the basis of an equitable division giving the right of use only.

“(b) All forests, underground mineral wealth, and waters of national importance, all live-stock and appurtenances, together with all model farms and agricultural enterprises, are proclaimed national property.

“(c) As the first step towards the complete transfer of factories, works, shops, mines, railways and other means of production and of transport to the ownership of the workers’ and peasants’ Soviet Republic, and in order to ensure the supremacy of the labouring masses over the exploiters, the Congress ratifies the soviet law on workers’ control of industry, and that on the Supreme Economic Council”³

¹ Quoted in Shvernik’s speech in *The Ninth Trade Union Congress*, Moscow, 1933, p. 3.

² Lenin doubtless had in mind, in emphasising collectivism, the “Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen” adopted by the French National Assembly in 1789, with its emphasis on individualism.

³ *Soviet Rule in Russia*, by W. R. Batsell, New York, 1929, p. 81. It was given in Molotov’s speech to the Central Executive Committee (TSIK) on January 23, 1933, as reported in *Moscow Daily News*, January 29, 1933. Molotov expressly said that this Declaration of 1918 was “written by the hand of Lenin”. A French translation of this “Declaration of the Rights of the Toiling and Exploited People, ratified by the Third National Congress of Soviets”, will be found in *Une Législation communiste*, by Raoul Labry, Paris, 1920.

The second document of this kind, formally adopted by the Central Executive Committee of the newly formed Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in 1923, is more lengthy and may be read in the Appendix at the end of Part I. It was addressed, doubtless in recollection of the American Declaration of Independence, "to all governments and all peoples of the earth". Its purpose was to announce to the world the formation of the new federal state. "From the first moment of their existence", runs this grandiloquent announcement, "the soviet republics were united by the bonds of close cooperation and mutual assistance, which subsequently assumed the form of treaties of alliance. The power of the workers and peasants united them into a single unit, with common needs, in their struggle against the attacks of foreign capitalist states, and against the internal counter-revolutionary attacks on the soviet form of society. The solidarity of the labouring masses united them in their common task of establishing fraternal cooperation between the liberated peoples. Together they emerged from the victorious proletarian revolution, having overthrown the power of their landowners and capitalists. Together they passed through the dire experiences of intervention and blockade, and emerged triumphant. Together they started the enormous task of restoring the national economy, on the basis of the new economic structure of society, after it had passed through unprecedented calamities.

"Whilst rendering to one another constant fraternal assistance with all their strength and resources, they nevertheless for a long time remained separate states only united by treaties of alliance.

"The further development of their mutual relations and the requirements of the international position have now led them to combine into one united state."

In the following chapters we seek to describe all the various parts of this constitution as they have grown, during the past eighteen years, into the organic structure of the hundred and seventy millions of people inhabiting the largest continuous geographical area in the world, comprising one-sixth of the entire land-surface of the globe.¹

¹ It is the invariable custom in the USSR to describe its area as one-sixth of the land-surface of the earth. In the League of Nations *Statistical Yearbook* the area of the USSR is given as 21,176,000 kilometres (of which 5,999,000 kilometres are in Europe). The earth's land-surface is there given as 132,520,000 kilometres, of which the USSR forms, accordingly, 15.981 per cent, or somewhat less than one-sixth (16.666 per cent), but much more than one-seventh (14.285 per cent). We do not know whether all the soviet islands in the Arctic Ocean are included in the League of Nations *Statistical Yearbook* estimate.

CHAPTER II

MAN AS A CITIZEN

In this chapter we deal with the part of the constitution of the USSR, the pyramid of soviets, which was enacted as the "fundamental law" of the new state, and has therefore been accepted by many commentators as if it were the whole of the constitution. How mistaken is this view, and to what serious errors in interpretation it leads, will appear in the following chapters.

The Origin of the Soviet System

"The soviet system", it has been well said, "was one of those innumerable creations of the human mind which seem to owe their existence to a fortunate historical accident. It has survived because it proved to be peculiarly well adapted to become the organ of that dictatorship of the workers which lies at the foundation of communist theory and practice."¹

By the word soviet, which originally meant any kind of council, is now understood a council of delegates or deputies chosen by the workers employed in the several factories and other establishments in an industrial city or district; or by the soldiers in the various units of an army; or by the peasants of a village or agricultural district or community; or by any combination of these constituent groups. Its most obvious difference from other political entities is that it avowedly excludes the representation of the capitalist employers, landowners, shop-keepers, and persons of no occupation, even if these are of the same tribe, race or nationality, or are resident within the area concerned. Soviets of this nature were spontaneously created in May and June of 1905 at Ivanovo-Voznesensk and Kostroma to conduct strikes of textile workers.² They seem to have been invented on the spur of the moment, owing particularly to the absence of any independent and trusted trade union. These working-class organs did not confine themselves to the strikes, and assumed some of the functions of the decrepit local government. It was, however, the soviet formed in St. Petersburg in October 1905 that gave a lead to the rest of Russia. At its first meeting, on October 13, 1905, "it was only partly representa-

¹ *How the Soviets Work*, by H. N. Brailsford, New York, 1927, p. 57. This admirable, unpretentious little book, together with its predecessor *The Russian Workers' Republic*, New York, 1920, by the same author—though more complete and erudite volumes are now available—still afford, in brief, the best pictures known to us of the life of the USSR.

² "It was the greatest strike ever witnessed in Russia. . . . Thus it was that the first soviet of workers' delegates in Russia was formed between May 15 and 18, 1905. For the first time the workers came forward as a class for themselves, and no longer under the influence of the 'democrats' as they had been from the time of Gapon" (*Brief History of Russia*, by M. N. Pokrovsky, translated by D. S. Mirsky, London, 1934, vol. ii. pp. 153-154, 189-190).

tive, consisting as it did of the factories from only the Nevsky district. A proclamation was issued in its name which said : We propose that every factory and every trade should elect a delegate for every hundred workers. The delegates of each factory shall form the factory committee. The delegates of all the factories shall form the General Workers' Committee of St. Petersburg." ¹ In the course of the next two months similar soviets sprang into being in a score of other Russian cities, from Reval to Baku, but their prompt suppression allowed no opportunity for any national congress of soviets to be convened.

The summary suppression of the soviets of 1905 did not prevent their remaining in the minds of the Russian workers. When, in February 1917, the tsarist régime fell, almost of its own rottenness, the workers in the Petrograd factories at once spontaneously formed a soviet, which did not concern itself specially with any strike, but discussed and voted on all matters of public interest. This example was quickly followed by the workers of Moscow and those of many other industrial cities. Presently the Petrograd soviet invited all the other city soviets to send delegates to constitute a congress of soviets, which appointed a standing committee to sit and act between one congress meeting and another. Here, it would seem, might be the basis for a workers' government of the whole state. But it does not appear that this was immediately recognised as a possible development of what had been originally mere strike committees. The Bolshevik Party was nominally still working for the Party programme of 1903, which had never been revised, and which, whilst emphasising the full collectivism of its economic side, contemplated, on the political side, the substitution, for the tsarist autocracy, of nothing more novel than an extremely democratic parliamentary assembly. ² Lenin, it is true, at once recognised the importance of the novel form of "soviets of workers' deputies" of 1905, in which he saw "new organs of people's power". At the Fourth Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Party, in April 1906, a resolution was adopted explaining that the soviets, in the process of struggle, became transformed from "pure strike organisations into organisations of *general revolutionary struggle*", and represented the "embryo of revolutionary power", dependent for "their strength and significance entirely upon the strength and success of *the uprising*"

¹ *Brief History of Russia*, vol. ii, p. 166. Details will be found in the Russian work *On the History of Soviets of Workers' Deputies in 1905*, by P. Gorin, second edn., Moscow, 1930. See also, for further details, *From Peter the Great to Lenin*, by S. P. Turin, 1935.

² This programme asserted that "the first and immediate task put before itself by the Russian Social Democratic Party is to overthrow the tsarist monarchy, and to create a democratic republic, whose constitution would guarantee the following :

"1. The sovereignty of the people, i.e. the concentration of all supreme state power in the hands of a legislative assembly, consisting of the people's representatives, and forming one chamber.

"2. Universal, equal and direct suffrage for all male and female citizens, twenty years old or over, at all elections to the legislative assembly and to the various local organs of self-government : the secret ballot at elections : the right of every voter to be elected to any representative institution : biennial parliaments : salaries to be paid to the people's representatives."

they were, in fact, at first regarded, as Lenin expressed it as late as (November 20, 1915, merely as "*organs of rebellion*" (*Works*, vol. xviii. 312). There seems, accordingly, some warrant for the suggestion of an acute German historian, that, whilst Lenin had long foreseen the necessity of transforming the bourgeois liberal revolution into a socialist revolution, and had at once recognised the soviets as the weapon for effecting this transformation, it was only in March 1917, on receiving in Switzerland the first authentic news of the revolution in Russia, "that he (Lenin) made a fateful discovery. He became convinced that the system of soldiers' and Workers' Councils—soviets—was the modern expression of the inevitable socialist-democratic revolution. . . . In the soviet Lenin recognised the existence, in a weak and elementary form, of an entirely new type of working-class government which could only be compared historically with the Paris Commune of 1871. His study of the soviet convinced Lenin that everything which Marx had said in his famous essay on the constitutional and political aspects of the Paris Commune applied with equal truth to the Russian soviet in 1917."¹

This is why, from the moment of his arrival in Petrograd, Lenin came more and more to speak of the soviets, as not only a means of checking and controlling the Provisional Government, and not merely as the instrument for the approaching overthrow of that Government, but even, occasionally, as the necessary basis of the new political constitution. It seems, however, that, right down to the actual seizure of power in October 1917, Lenin apparently thought it better that the Bolshevik Party should not commit itself definitely against a democratic parliamentary system as the political instrument for the administration of the socialist state that he intended.² This, however, did not prevent the launching of the slogan "All Power to the Soviets".

By October 1917 Lenin had become enthusiastic about the soviets not

¹ *Geschichte des Bolshevismus*, by Arthur Rosenberg, 1932, translated as *History of Bolshevism*, 1934, p. 87.

In the third of Lenin's "Letters from Afar", dated March 11/24, 1917, he discussed the rôle of soviets as organs, not merely of rebellion, but of proletarian democracy, as "the government of the soviets of workers' deputies" (*Works*, vol. ii. of English edition, p. 35). In the "Fifth Letter" he summed up that the next stage of the revolution must be the transfer of the state power to a new government which "must be organised on the model of the Soviets of Workers' and Peasants' Deputies" (*ibid.* p. 62, and see also pp. 99, 123, 128, dated April 1917).

² It is interesting to notice that, in May 1917, when Lenin was instructed to prepare for printing "all the material at the disposal of the Central Committee relating to a revision of the Party Programme"—this material consisting mainly of Lenin's own draft of the proposed new programme—he left unaltered the demand for a single supreme legislative assembly, elected by universal direct suffrage and secret ballot, merely adding proportional representation and recall by a majority of electors. His changing opinion is indicated only by the proposal to prefix a declaration asserting that "all representative parliamentary institutions would gradually give place to soviets of the people's representatives (from various classes and professions, or from various localities), functioning both as legislative and executive bodies".

(The old programme of 1903, and Lenin's proposed amendments, "written in May 1917", will be found in vol. xx. bk. i. of the English edition of Lenin's *Works*, p. 353. The revision was not proceeded with until 1919.)

merely as an "organ of rebellion" or an instrument of revolution but also as "a step forward in the development of democracy"; though the terms in which he describes them indicate that he had at that time a very inadequate vision of the gigantic edifice of government that was destined to be erected on this basis.¹ Finally, when the uprising had practically achieved success, and the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets was deliberating, actually within sound of the guns, it was decided, at his instance, by a large majority, that the supreme power should be vested, not in any parliamentary assembly, but in the All-Russian Congress of Soviets itself. In the course of its continuous session of twenty hours the same congress appointed a provisional "workers' and peasants' government", to be known as the Soviet of People's Commissars (Sovnarkom), to act under the control of the congress and its central executive committee (TSIK); adopted Lenin's thundering declarations as to the immediate conclusion of peace; the transfer of the nationalised land to the peasantry in usufruct; and the election of workers' committees in all industrial establishments; and incidentally decided that the title of the new state should be the Russian Soviet Republic.²

During the next few months the Sovnarkom of People's Commissars, under the presidency of Lenin, governed the country with a high hand, struggling with a mass of executive business and issuing innumerable decrees on small matters and on great. Meanwhile some of the People's Commissars and various small committees were discussing the different items, and drafting the clauses, of a systematic constitution.³ All these

¹ Lenin's words are worth quoting. "The soviets", he wrote, "are the new state apparatus, which in the first place represents the armed force of the workers and peasants, a force which is not divorced from the people, as was the force of the old standing army. . . . Secondly, this apparatus represents a connection with the masses, with the majority of the people, that is so intimate, so indissoluble, so readily verifiable and renewable, that nothing like it was even approached in the former state. Thirdly, this apparatus, because it is elective, and its personnel is subject to recall in accordance with the will of the people without any bureaucratic formalities, is far more democratic than were the former ones. Fourthly, it represents a firm connection with the most diverse occupations, thus facilitating all sorts of radical reforms without any bureaucracy. Fifthly, it represents a form of organisation of the vanguard, i.e. of the most class-conscious, most energetic, more progressive section of the oppressed classes of the workers and peasants, whereby the vanguard can elevate, educate and lead in its train the whole gigantic mass of these classes which until now have stood absolutely outside all political life, outside history. Sixthly, it makes it possible to combine the advantages of parliamentarism with the advantages of immediate and direct democracy, i.e. to unite, in persons of elected representatives of the people, both legislative and executive functions. Compared with bourgeois parliamentarism this is a step forward in the development of democracy which has an historical world significance" ("Will the Bolsheviks retain State Power?" written during October 1917 and published in the first and only number of the new issue of *Prosveshchenie*, a monthly journal. Included in Lenin's *Works*, vol. xxi. bk. ii. pp. 26-27, of the English edition).

² *Soviet Rule in Russia*, by W. R. Batsell, 1929, pp. 52-53; *The Soviet State*, by B. W. Maxwell, 1934, p. 18; *History of the Russian Revolution*, by L. Trotsky, vol. iii., 1933, pp. 297-337; *La Révolution russe*, par Fernand Grenard, Paris, 1933, chap. xii.; *History of the Russian Revolution, 1917-1921*, by W. H. Chamberlin, 1935.

³ A summary of the proceedings of this period, taken mainly from *Istoria sovetskoi Konstitutsii*, and *Osnovy sovetskoi Konstitutsii*, both by G. C. Gurvich, is given in *Soviet Rule in Russia*, by W. R. Batsell, 1929, pp. 57-65.

suggestions needed to be adjusted and combined, a task which the Central Executive Committee entrusted early in April 1918 to a drafting commission of fifteen, among whom were Sverdlov and Stalin, but not Lenin himself. When the Fifth All-Russian Congress of Soviets assembled in July 1918, the draft so prepared was, without prolonged debate or serious challenge, immediately adopted as the "constitution or fundamental law" of the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic (RSSFR). With many minor amendments this fundamental law has remained to this day (1935) substantially unchanged; and in 1923 its provisions were, in the main, adopted for the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR).

The Base of the Pyramid

The stability and permanence of a pyramid depend essentially upon the width and soundness of its base. In the USSR the electorate is at once more widely extended and more peculiarly restricted than in any other country; with the net result that it constitutes by far the largest voting body in the world, having at least as high a proportion of electors to the adult population as the United Kingdom or the United States of America, whilst in the USSR a much higher percentage of that electorate are actual voters at elections than in either of those countries. The right to vote, and with it the right of eligibility for office, is avowedly based on active participation in socially useful work of one or other kind, by hand or by brain; although not excluding those who, by age or infirmity, have ceased to be capable of such work. Every man or woman in the USSR who is not included in one or other of the legally disqualified categories finds himself or herself, at the early age of eighteen,¹ automatically entitled to vote, and to be elected to any position. The student of other electoral systems will be struck by the inclusiveness of this franchise. Apart from sheer incapacity to get to the meeting, there are practically none of the usual impediments to the actual exercise of the vote. Unlike every other political system, Soviet Communism does not exclude from its electorate residents living within its borders merely because they are of alien birth or nationality.² There is no disqualification by sex or marriage; by illiteracy or inability to speak or read any particular language; or by religious belief or lack of religious belief. Nor is there any requirement of independent occupancy or period of residence, which elsewhere so often excludes the mass of actually serving soldiers and sailors, domestic servants, lodgers in other people's houses and residents in hotels, boarding-

¹ The minimum age qualifying for the electoral franchise in different countries ranges from 18 to 25. The only countries, besides the USSR, allowing people of 18 to vote (and then men only) are Turkey, Argentina and (if married) Mexico. The minimum age for eligibility for elective office ranges from 18 (USSR only) to as much as 30. "No country in the world has yet thought of denying the franchise on the grounds of old age" (*Theory and Practice of Modern Government*, by Herman Finer, 1932, vol. i. p. 415).

² See p. 18 for an instance of an American citizen being allowed to vote. Among the members elected in January 1935 to the Moscow City Soviet is an American citizen (a negro).

houses and institutions ; together with the majority of the different kinds of "transients". There is no disfranchisement of persons actually serving in any kind of public employment, such as sometimes disqualifies soldiers, revenue officers, policemen, postmen or other recipients of government pay or pension. Nor is there any disqualification for pauperism or the receipt of public assistance of any kind ; nor for bankruptcy ; nor (except where the deprivation of political rights for a stated term forms part of a judicial sentence) even for conviction of a criminal offence ; though persons in exile, or actually detained in penal institutions, are disqualified for the period of their exile or detention.¹

The Categories of the "Deprived"

On the other hand, there is compiled and publicly posted, in each electoral area, a list of local residents belonging to certain specified classes from whom both the right to vote and eligibility for elected office, and equally for trade union and consumers' cooperative society membership, are statutorily withheld. "The following persons", enacts the "Fundamental Law" of the RSFSR,² which has formed the model for the laws of

¹ The "Instructions for the Election of Soviets and Delegates to the Congresses", dated October 1, 1934 (printed in *Izvestia*, October 5, 1934), provide expressly, in the final paragraph of Article 14, that foreign "workers" have the right to vote ; and that foreign "specialists" may be granted the right to vote if they are loyal to the soviet power.

² Fundamental Law of the RSFSR, ratified by the Fifth Congress, July 10, 1918, fourth section, chap. lxiv. ; *The Soviet State*, by B. W. Maxwell, 1934, pp. 31-34 ; *Soviet Rule in Russia*, by W. R. Batsell, 1929, p. 92. This article was slightly modified in wording in 1925 and 1929 (becoming chap. lxix.), as given in French in *URSS : La Fédération soviétique et ses républiques*, by André Pierre, Paris, 1932, p. 26, and in the *Annuaire diplomatique* for 1933 (Moscow, 1933).

The decided cases show the following as held to be "deprived" : "Farmers, stock-raisers and mechanics who employ labour to an extent that enlarges their business beyond that of a toiler ; agriculturists and stock-raisers who also have trade and industrial establishments such as mills or shops with motor equipment, or those who manage them with permanent or seasonal outside help ; persons who rent out complicated farm machinery and motor equipment ; owners of large fishing-vessels who rent them out ; persons who loan money on security of stock, machinery, etc. ; persons who charge a land rent which is considered by rayon tax commissions as exorbitant ; persons who rent orchards or vineyards for purposes of exploitation (exceptions may be made when the tax commission does not consider the rents high enough to impose the unified individual and agricultural tax) ; owners and renters of undertakings who distribute work to individuals to be done at home, or lease or sub-lease these undertakings to a second party ; private traders, jobbers and middlemen, renters and owners of undertakings of factory-plant dimensions ; former officers and officials of the White Armies and leaders of counter-revolutionary bands ; all employees and agents of the tsarist police, especially of the corps of gendarmes, and all persons who were directly or indirectly connected with the former police ; ministers and officials of the old régime ; members of the imperial family ; former members of the prison staffs ; leaders of the nobility ; members of the prosecuting staffs and those who have held commanding positions in disciplinary battalions ; former and present employees of religious cults ; persons who have been exiled in an administrative manner for the duration of their exile and those who have been deprived of the franchise by judicial process, and persons in penal institutions" (*The Soviet State*, by B. W. Maxwell, 1934, pp. 32-33).

The latest statement of the categories of the "deprived" is that contained in the "Instructions for the Election of Soviets and Delegates to the Congresses", dated October 1, 1934, and printed in *Izvestia*, October 5, 1934.

all the constituent republics as well as for that of the federation (USSR),
 "have neither the right to vote nor the right to be elected, even if they
 are included within one of the above-mentioned categories [of persons
 entitled to the franchise]:

"(a) Persons employing hired labour for the sake of profit.

"(b) Persons living on income not derived from their own labour,
 such as interest on capital, income from industrial enterprise, landed
 property, etc.

"(c) Private business men and trade commercial agents.

"(d) Monks and clergymen of all religious denominations.

"(e) Employees and agents of the former police, or of the special
 gendarme corps and secret police, and members of the former ruling
 dynasty of Russia.

"(f) Persons legally recognised as mentally deranged or imbecile, as
 well as those under guardianship.

"(g) Persons convicted of 'infamous or mercenary crimes' for a
 period fixed by judicial sentence, according to law."

The percentage of members of these "deprived" categories has varied
 greatly from time to time and from locality to locality. In ten districts
 (uezds) of Pensensky gubernia in 1922, in which there were 892,244
 electors, it was found by a statistical enquiry that the total number of the
 "deprived" was 9186, or just over 1 per cent of the electorate. Among
 them were 2070 traders and middlemen, 1187 rentiers and 581 employers,
 making a total of 3838 (two-fifths of the total exclusions) "deprived"
 on grounds of economic class. There were 1814 clergy and 1420 former
 members of the Tsar's police, making a total of 3234 (one-third of the
 exclusions), disqualified on account of professional occupation. Finally
 there were 1750 excluded by judicial sentence for crime, and 564 for
 unsoundness of mind.¹ On the other hand, it is alleged that in Leningrad,
 Kiev and Moscow there used to be, ten years ago, more than 10 per cent
 of the electorate in the "deprived" categories.

Of the numbers formerly excluded from the suffrage, many have died
 and others have been enfranchised by successive acts of leniency. At
 first the disqualification applied equally to persons who had at any time
 belonged to these categories but had ceased to do so, and also to the
 spouses and to the sons and daughters of such persons. But it has for
 some years been possible for the local electoral commissions to remove
 from the list of the disqualified the sons and daughters who could show
 that they are engaged in socially useful work, and have completed five
 years' service in it. Recent laws and election instructions have now
 admitted to the franchise all persons otherwise qualified who have reached
 the age of eighteen since 1925. A similar opportunity of escape may be
 given to older persons who have been for five years occupied in productive

¹ *Soviets, Congresses of Soviets and Ispolkoms, being Materials for the Study of the
 Soviet Administration* (Russian), Moscow, 1924, p. 7.

and socially necessary labour, and have proved their loyalty to the soviet power, at the discretion of the local commission responsible for the management of the elections, by whom the list of disqualified local residents is annually prepared.¹ This local discretion is said to be now exercised with reasonable leniency, each person being dealt with according to what are deemed his present merits in the way of socially useful occupation.

The result is that the numbers disqualified have been steadily declining, partly owing to statutory amendments, partly as a consequence of the trend of decisions on cases made the subject of appeal, and partly owing to the increasing leniency of the local electoral commissions.² The latest statistics as to the "deprived" that we have seen relate to the soviet elections of 1931 and were stated to cover between 80 and 90 per cent of the whole USSR. Of the total population over eighteen an average of 3.9 per cent were disqualified, as compared with 4.9 per cent at the elections of 1929. In the cities the fall had been from 8.5 to 4.9 per cent, whilst in the rural districts it was from 4.1 to 3.7 per cent.³ No fewer than 28.4 per cent of those "deprived" in the cities, and 43.4 per cent

¹ By the "Instructions for the Election of Soviets and Delegates to the Congresses", dated October 1, 1934 (printed in *Izvestia*, October 5, 1934) it is made clear that former kulaks working in the gold and platinum industry may be reinstated in their right to vote after three years of productive labour; and *udarniki* among them even earlier.

² A recent careful enquiry into decided cases "shows that . . . the following classes have the franchise: fishermen and peasants who sell the product of their toil in the open market: owners of all kinds of undertakings such as dairies, etc., who do not employ outside labour or distribute work to individual households: mechanics who do not employ outside labour, or who employ only two apprentices and one journeyman and sell the product of their own toil only on the open market: persons who live on the winnings of state lotteries or interest on state bonds or savings which are deposited in state savings banks: persons who receive aid from friends and relatives abroad, or insurance benefits from abroad: invalids of toil and war who are conducting small businesses: janitors, bellringers and similar employees of churches, and, strange as it may seem, members of [church] councils: members of the free professions who perform public useful labour, and children of those who have been disfranchised but who have come of age since 1925, who may have been as minors dependent on their parents but who are not performing useful work, although they still may be living with their parents" (*The Soviet State*, by B. W. Maxwell, 1934, p. 32).

³ The following table shows how each category contributes to the total:

Category	Percentage of Total Disqualifications	
	In Cities	In Rural Areas
Employers	5.3	22.2
Unearned incomes	8.3	5.9
Traders	39.9	10.1
Clergy	4.9	6.8
Former police	3.2	4.7
Unsound mind	1.2	1.5
Judicial sentence	8.8	5.4
Dependants of above over 18	28.4	43.4
	100	100

From Report of Presidium of Central Executive Committee (TSIK) of All-Union Congress of Soviets, 1931; see summary by Lazare Teper, in *American Political Science Review*, October 1932.

those "deprived" in the rural areas, were dependants over eighteen "deprived" husbands or parents. The decline is continuing. Counting by families, it is doubtful whether the exclusions, apart from unsound mind or judicial sentence, now average, in the rural areas, as many as 1 per cent of the families; or, in the cities, as many as 2 or 3 per cent of the families. "In 1934", declared Molotov to the Seventh All-Union Congress of Soviets, "there were 2.5 per cent disfranchised persons from among the entire adult population, which amounts to a little over two millions. Compare that with the total number of voters to the Soviets, which amounted last year to 91 million persons." Within another decade it is anticipated that practically all those "deprived" on grounds of present or former occupation, together with their sons and daughters, ill, with one exception, have disappeared from the lists.¹ The net result of the enfranchisements and disqualifications is now a colossal and ever-rising electorate, which in 1935 reached 91 millions of men and women, being 55 per cent of the census population: an electorate of which some 85 per cent actually participates in the voting, and which increases at the rate of more than two millions per annum.²

The Village Meeting

Whilst the electoral franchise is the same in the village as in the city, the methods of election necessarily differ. We take the village meeting first, not only because it represents three-quarters of the whole population of the USSR, but also because it is typically Russian in its characteristics.

The village meeting represents probably the oldest constitutional form in Russia; and, as in various other countries, it antedates alike representative assemblies and statute law. Like the English parish vestry meeting of the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries,³ and its seventeenth-century offspring, the New England town meeting, the village meeting in Russia cannot be shown to have had any statutory origin. Whilst it has been legally regulated and restricted from time to time, and also has had additional functions assigned to it, there has never been any precise

¹ The exception is that of the priesthood. Whether or not the number of ministers of religion continues to shrink, we cannot anticipate that they will entirely disappear from the USSR, nor can we speculate as to the possibility of a change of soviet policy when all anxiety about the continuance of the soviet régime has passed away.

² After each general election, the Central Executive Committee (TSIK) publishes a report (*Ossnovnye itogi raboty Pravitelstva*). The latest totals (in round numbers) are as under:

	Electorate	Voters	Percentage of Electorate
1927	77,800,000	39,000,000	50.2
1929	81,300,000	51,600,000	63.5
1931	85,900,000	60,900,000	70.9
1934	91,000,000	77,000,000	85.0

³ See *The Parish and the County*, by S. and B. Webb, 1907.

towards impressing the audience, and especially those members who have been or who are likely to be elected to the soviet; and who are expected to be present to supply information and to answer questions. The village meeting may pass resolutions in the nature of suggestions or instructions on any subject whatsoever, addressed either to the village soviet or to any higher authority. Thus the meeting may voice the popular desire for a public bath-house or a village hall, or for the establishment or closing of the government vodka shop.¹ All this helps to make the discussion interesting. Whether or not the resolutions are carried out, they have always to be forwarded to the rayon soviet, and they may be sent to any other authorities concerned; and their repetition in the same or in other localities becomes influential.

Thus, it seems that the working constitution of the USSR—taking, for the moment, only that part of it which lives in the villages and is represented in the pyramid of soviets—is rooted in an almost inconceivable amount of public discussion, in literally a million or two of small local meetings in the course of each year. Whether or not the vociferous debaters at these innumerable meetings get all the attention they desire, the political student will note, not only the amount of political education, but also the sense of continuous participation in public administration that such discussions create.

We have not ourselves had the opportunity of attending any village election meetings; and we have found hardly any detailed description by eye-witnesses. But the following, by a competent American observer, gives what we believe to be a characteristic sketch.

"I was present", writes Karl Borders, "at the election at Maslov Kut² in 1926, and even voted (for all resident workers of the country above the age of eighteen are eligible to vote whether actually Russian citizens or not). . . . As soon as the registration of those present was verified, the meeting opened with a speech by an organiser from the county centre. The visitor urged the selection of good, honest workers to the soviet, and particularly asked that some women be elected . . . A caucus had previously prepared a complete list of candidates for the thirty-six places on the soviet, and this slate was first offered *in toto* to the assembly. With very slight parley this overture was almost unanimously rejected, and it was decided to make nominations from the floor. . . . One by one the names were shouted up to the secretary, who entered them as candidates. Sometimes a few identifying remarks were made,

¹ We have been told that, in one case in which a resolution to close the vodka shop was carried, the women electors rallied at the next meeting and got it reversed—not because they approved of the men's drinking habits, but because they thought the closing would only lead to the men journeying, or sending their wives, to the nearest vodka shop 16 versts away!

² *Village Life under the Soviets*, by Karl Borders, New York, 1927, pp. 111-115. The author is an American graduate, who spent over a year in the USSR, after long experience of Russians in Chicago.

Maslov Kut is a village in the rayon of Archangelskoe in the North Caucasus, with a population of 3600 in 750 houses or courtyards.

but for the most part all of those suggested were well known and needed no such introduction. . . . The wish of the voter, as of old, is expressed by the raising of the hand. Nearly a hundred years ago the Tsar's government attempted to introduce the ballot-box in the village assemblies, but the peasants called it 'playing marbles', and would have nothing to do with it. Again the soviets have simply used an ancient custom, and have not invented one for the occasion. It is true that this open method of voting makes clear the political persuasion of the voters. But in this instance it seemed to deter freedom of expression very little. The little bloc of richer peasants voted together as a man. The few women stood manfully by the members of their sex who were nominated. The whole yard turned against the candidates offered from the workers of the sovkhos, reflecting clearly the effects of the land dispute between the village and the government farm which had been hanging in the courts for many months. Hour after hour the process moved on in the Russian way. As in the old village Mir, discussion ran free and high. . . . At times a candidate was asked to mount the verandah so that he might be seen by all. One was pronounced too young. Others were refused election on the basis of their indifferent records. The kulaks voted solidly against the women. My own political enthusiasm waned after two or three hours . . . but the villagers . . . used the rest of the mid-winter day to select the whole quota of candidates and the auditing commission, which by law must be chosen separately at the time of the general election. The final result showed that of the thirty-six members elected to the soviet three were women, five communists and remainder non-Party peasants of the village. . . . On the whole, one is impressed with the 'essential democracy' of these . . . meetings, and is certainly not aware of any intimidation on the part of the authorities. There is an intimacy about the smaller unit of the village, with its old-entrenched families, that makes little political hoodwinking possible. . . . Certainly the great emphasis on getting out the vote does not argue for the widely believed fiction that the communists are afraid of the will of the peasant. The daily conduct of public business is the only form of politics in which the peasant is interested."

The total number of rural electoral areas electing selosoviets was officially stated in 1931 as 71,780 when the number of villages and hamlets was given as 599,890, so that, on an average, eight or nine of these were united in each selosoviet. The village in some parts of the USSR has usually only a few hundred inhabitants, whilst in other parts it runs up to as many as 10,000.¹ But it may be doubted whether throughout this

¹ "The agricultural population of the USSR is settled mostly in villages. Isolated farms are found only in the northern and north-western regions of the Union; generally speaking, in the forest districts north and north-west of the blacksoil zone. Here the population is settled on isolated farms or in small villages. The average population of the rural villages in these regions is small, about 100 persons; in some regions a little below (70 to 90); and in some regions a little above (120 to 150). But in the blacksoil area there are very few isolated farms, and villages are larger. Here the average size of

huge territory there is any exact or complete enumeration of the separate settlements or hamlets. Wherever a new settlement arises in a previously unsettled part of the forest or the steppe, the inhabitants spontaneously begin meeting to discuss their local affairs, and they may presently obtain recognition as a separate voting-place for the selosoviet in the area of which they reside. Indeed, it is the practice, as outlying hamlets grow up apart from the main village, for the electoral commission itself spontaneously to arrange for them to have separate meetings at which to elect their own quota of the village soviet. For the RSFSR, which has 53,000 village soviets, or five-sevenths of the whole, we have been informed that the number of such separate "curia" or "election points" was, in 1929 275,000 as compared with 207,000 in 1927. The number increases annually with the constant growth of population. Thus, it may be assumed that, for the whole USSR, the total number of separate meetings simultaneously electing members of village soviets in 1935 must be something like 400,000, plainly the most extensive electoral machinery known to political science. The total number of members elected to village soviets was stated in 1932 to have increased from 1,112,000 in 1927 to 1,510,800 in 1932. In 1935 it will approach nearer to two millions: a colossal representation of rural opinion by direct popular election!

Administration by the Village Soviet

It is difficult to discover and to describe, in terms of British and American constitutional usage, either the exact degree of legal autonomy or the customary sphere of action of the 70,000 selosoviets of the USSR. We print as an appendix to this volume a recent formulation of their statutory duties.¹ The Soviet Government is not content that the village

a village is from 400 to 500 inhabitants. In Ukraine, however, the typical village has from 1000 to 2000, or from 2000 to 5000 and from 5000 to 10,000. Large villages are characteristic of all the blacksoil zone, particularly of the prairie regions. The villages in the regions of new colonisation, such as Western Siberia, often are large, with about 1000 to 2000 inhabitants. Of the new regions of colonisation, only in the dry steppes of central Asia are small villages typical, perhaps because here the native population is semi-nomadic, and crop raising is of secondary importance" (*Agricultural Russia and the Wheat Problem*, by Vladimir P. Timoshenko, Stanford University, California, 1932, pp. 33-41).

There is noticeable a tendency to take out of the areas of the village soviets (selosoviets) a considerable number of more or less urbanised or industrialised places, either as containing a large proportion of wage or salary earners, whether in isolated factories or workshops, motor-tractor stations, collective farms, (kolkhosi) or state farms (sovkhosi), or as suburban districts destined to be more closely connected with the rapidly growing cities. These abstracted areas have their own elected soviets, and choose their own delegates either directly to the rayon soviet (ispolkom) or to the soviet of the neighbouring city, at the rate of one for every sixty electors (equal to about 115 population).

¹ Decree of February 7, 1930, of USSR TSIK: included in RSFSR decree of January 1, 1931, and in corresponding decrees of the other constituent republics. For an able summary see *The Soviet State*, by B. W. Maxwell, 1934, pp. 83-99.

Note that a new election of the whole selosoviet is to be held (a) if more than half the elected members have resigned or left the district, and there is an insufficient number of "candidates" (substitutes); (b) if two-thirds of the members request a new election; (c) "if a selosoviet does not follow the proletarian class-policy, or if it includes in its

soviet, should deal only with the questions of local or village importance; and the newest decree insists that every selosoviet should consider and discuss also affairs of rayon, oblast, republic and even USSR importance. It is laid down, in a general way, that, within its territorial limits, the village soviet has control of the execution by all citizens and officials of the laws and instructions of the government. The village soviet is to prevent all interference with the execution of the measures taken by the central government, or with the policy from time to time prescribed. The village soviet may, within its wide competence under the statute, issue obligatory ordinances and impose administrative penalties and fines. It may establish village courts, with jurisdiction over disputes as to property or conditions of employment and over petty offences. And the village soviet is expressly directed to support the great voluntary association, elsewhere described, having for its object the widest possible participation of the whole population in the measures taken for national defence. But perhaps the most interesting enlargement of the sphere of the village soviet is the range of duties assigned to it in connection with the newly developed kolkhosi or collective farms within its area. The village soviet is to instruct, to supervise, to inspect, to audit, to insist on the fulfilment of all obligations, and on obedience to all laws and regulations. Moreover, it is equally part of the duty of the village soviet to keep an eye on the operations of the state manufacturing and trading departments in its locality, and on those of the consumers' cooperative societies, in order that the village customers may not be balked in getting what they desire, and so failing to swell the receipts by their purchases.¹ Within the village itself, there is practically nothing that the soviet may not organise, regulate or provide at the public expense, from roads and water supplies, through clubhouses and dance floors, up to schools, theatres and hospitals.

To the British reader, accustomed to the narrow range of work allowed to the parish or rural district council, the lengthy and varied catalogue of duties prescribed for the local authority of the village in the Russian steppe or Siberian forest will seem absurdly pretentious, all the more so when he is told by the soviet jurists that within the village the selosoviet is "sovereign"; meaning that nothing which it does requires the sanction of any higher authority before it is put in operation.² This does not look

membership people who do not adhere to the above policy, or if it has manifested a general inactivity" (decree of January 1, 1931).

¹ The People's Commissar of Finance for the RSFSR—the Chancellor of the Exchequer for a republic of more than a hundred million inhabitants, who happens to be a woman (Varvara Nikolaievna Yakovleva)—called attention, in her "Budget speech" to the Central Executive Committee of the RSFSR, to the financial deficit; and insisted on the need, not for reductions in public expenditure, but for greater attention by the Government trading departments and the consumers' cooperatives to the desires of their customers, so as to increase the receipts. "The local soviets", she declared, "will have to watch more carefully the work of the trade organisation" (*Moscow Daily News*, December 20, 1933).

² Or, as an American author puts it, "the village soviet is the highest governmental organ within a given territorial limit" (*The Soviet State*, by B. W. Maxwell, 1934, p. 89).

as if the Soviet Government was afraid of the peasant, or distrustful of popular democracy! Nor does the Government seem to grudge any amount of public expenditure on raising the standard of life of the mass of the people. Every public department at the republic capital, or at Moscow, is, in fact, genuinely eager to stir all the 70,000 village soviets into the utmost public activity. Far from wanting to concentrate everything in the ministerial commissariats of the USSR, or even in those of the several constituent republics, the widest scope is given to each of the directly elected councils of the 70,000 villages between the Baltic and the Pacific, to do all it can for its own people. The view taken by the central authorities is that it is only by the widely dispersed efforts of the local bodies—in fact, only by the active participation of the people themselves in their incessant meetings which the village soviet obeys—that the frightful social backwardness of the countryside can be, *within this generation*, overcome. The government of the USSR is perhaps unique among governments in this determined refusal to postpone rural social reform to a distant future.

It is, of course, not to be supposed that the immense catalogue of duties decreed in 1930, and recited summarily in Appendix IV of Part I, are actually being performed by the village soviets. Probably no selosoviet is dealing with all the matters prescribed, and the majority are doing but little. What is significant is that they are all empowered to take any action they choose in all these directions; and that they are being frequently exhorted to use this liberty to make their own decisions. Thus, what even the downtrodden Russian peasant is gradually acquiring is a sense of political freedom.

Administrative Safeguards

The student of administration will ask how the Soviet Government can afford to allow this unprecedented freedom to 70,000 village councils, without such safeguards as prior enquiry and sanction, a statutory maximum for local expenditure and a limit to local taxation; without even an official expert audit or the requirement of a report. And this in a country supposed to be enveloped in red tape! The answer is to be found in the characteristic soviet constitution about to be described. The principle may be summed up as freedom to err, subject always to veto and reversal by superior authority. Any decision or action by the village soviet will be, when it is heard of, summarily vetoed and reversed whenever it has contravened any specific prescription or action by any higher authority. Moreover, any decision or action by the village soviet may be vetoed and reversed by any higher authority, such as the ispolkom, or executive committee of the rayon, and will certainly be so treated by the highest constitutional authority of the constituent republic or of the Soviet Union, if it is thought to be seriously inconsistent with, or inconveniently obstructive of, the policy laid down by superior authority.

And there is a further safeguard. Although there may be, as yet, less than 100,000 cells of the Communist Party among the 400,000 village or hamlet separate meetings—there must, in fact, be a large number of “electoral points” at which there sits not even one member of the Party or a single Comsomol—yet the Party influence is widespread. Party guidance will not long be wanting if any village soviet shows signs of going astray; and the advice and instruction given by inspector or other official, or even by a visitor who is a Party member, will, if unheeded, in due course be supported and enforced by superior authority. And although a large proportion of the 400,000 electoral meetings must be uncontrolled by the presence of even one Party member or Comsomol, it is significant of the character and popularity of the Party that, out of 59,797 village soviets at the 1931 election, 35,151 chose a Party member as elected president, who is always a member of the local presidium, whilst 3242 others elected a Comsomol.¹

The Village Executive

Just as the Mir had its starosta, so the selosoviet has its president, with other executive officers, in addition to the secretary (who may or may not be a member of the soviet) whom it appoints. These executive officers, by a recent decree, are to number one for every seventy-five households in areas of complete collectivisation, and one for every fifty households in areas of incomplete collectivisation. They are appointed by the soviet for a term of two or three months, the persons qualified as electors and under fifty in the case of men, and under forty-five in the case of women, being taken by rotation. If they are members of a kolkhos, or collective farm, or employed in any public office at a wage or salary, they are entitled to take “time off” for their public service under the selosoviet without loss of income. Others may receive pay for their term of service at a rate fixed by the soviet; a tax to cover the expense being levied upon all persons in the village who are disqualified from holding the office, either as being for one or other reason disfranchised or disqualified by judicial sentence from holding positions in state institutions, or else as awaiting trial for some criminal offence. The duties of these village executives are to keep order; to protect public property; to keep open the highways and supervise sanitation; to report all violations of law, and to carry out the decisions of the village courts; as well as to perform any other functions that the soviet may put upon them.

The soviet is required by decree to appoint besides its ispolkom, or executive committee, also ² a number of sections or committees to deal with separate parts of the work, and it is strongly urged to associate with

¹ Report of Central Electoral Commission of the USSR on the elections to the soviets in 1931, and composition of the organs of power, p. 9 (in Russian).

² In large villages, where the soviet consists of more than fifteen members, it appoints a presidium instead of an ispolkom.

its own members on these sections a large proportion of the village residents. This is in accordance with the fundamental principle of Soviet Communism of ensuring the participation in government of as large a proportion of the people as possible. It is left to the legislatures of the several constituent republics to prescribe exactly which sections must be appointed. In the RSFSR it is ordered that every selosoviet shall appoint at least seven sections, for agriculture, women's work and interests, education, cultural developments, finances, trade and cooperatives, and finally, for the general communal life. In the numerous settlements or hamlets apart from the main village and entitled to elect their own quotas to the village soviets, settlement sections are to be appointed. In addition, selosoviets appoint special committees to deal with particular collective farms, or to collect taxes, and also such officers as statisticians, harvest controllers, etc. Over and over again the decrees insist on the duty of the soviets to incite, persuade and press the apathetic toiling masses, and particularly the women, to take interest in public affairs, to join the sections, to attend the meetings, and to vote. Village and settlement meetings are to be held every few months. Three times a year must the soviet render an account of its stewardship to specially convened meetings which every elector is urged to attend.

At first the village soviets had no separate budget, and their receipts and expenditure formed part of the budget of the volost (now rayon).¹ Now each selosoviet is ordered to make its own budget in the way prescribed by the constituent republic. In the RSFSR it is ordered that the village budget must include the expenditure of the soviet on all its functions or duties; and the mere recital of its liabilities for maintenance and repair of every conceivable public concern within the village territory is a reminder to the soviet itself of how diverse those functions and duties actually are. Its revenues include the income derived from local public property and enterprises, the local taxes and dues collected within the village territory, including the agricultural tax and contributions to local

¹ As recently as 1925, in six important districts, only about 13 per cent of the selosoviets had their own budgets.

District	Total Number of Selosoviets	Number of them having Budgets
North Caucasus . . .	1911	252
Vladimirsk . . .	1411	71
Stalingradsk . . .	926	13
Briansk . . .	598	66
German Volga . . .	287	287
North Dvinsk . . .	236	18
	5369	707

(*Local Soviet Apparatus* (in Russian), by A. Luzhin and M. Rezunov, of the Institute of Socialist Construction and Soviet Law, Moscow Communist Academy).

revenues under various laws and agreements with the state, the constituent republic and the collective farms; and lastly, the "self-assessments" levied by the village soviet itself. These latter require the majority decision of a special meeting at which not fewer than 50 per cent of the entire electorate must be present. The assessments most frequently levied are, we are informed, those for the building and maintenance of educational, health and cultural institutions; the improvement of communications by roads; veterinary and other agricultural institutions; fire protection; public baths and water supply from wells and ponds; the provision of a new burial-ground; and the employment of a village watchman. The information is that the number of village soviets actively undertaking local work, and the aggregate revenue and expenditure of the village soviets in the USSR, are both increasing annually by leaps and bounds.¹

As is usual in the Soviet Union, it is the spirit in which the village is dealt with that is more important than the language of the laws. We cannot sum up our description of the organisation and activities of the village soviets better than by quoting at length from an address by M. I. Kalinin, the president of the Central Executive Committee (TSIK) of the USSR, to a conference of chairmen of village soviets of the western province of the RSFSR in 1933. "It is", he declared, "no easy task to lead a village soviet. You must always remember that, on the one hand, a village soviet is a government organ, an organ representing the government in the village; and that, on the other hand, the village soviet is an elective organ, which represents the workers of the village. Upon you, as the chairmen of village soviets, hard and very complicated tasks devolve.

"Our biggest trouble is that many of our village soviets are inclined to resort primarily to administrative measures. A weak chairman of a village soviet tries to do everything through administrative orders; and the weaker he is, the more frequently does he resort to this method. On the other hand, the more politically developed a chairman of a village soviet is, the more authoritative he is among the collective and individual farmers, the less frequently does he have to resort to administrative methods, to the employment of methods of coercion.

"Take the following example. A chairman of a village soviet issues an official order that on such and such a day all must appear to do some

¹ The activities of the village soviets were even stimulated in 1933 in a way which has not yet occurred to the British Minister responsible for village life. A contest for the best village soviet in the USSR was announced by the All-Union Central Executive Committee (TSIK), which set aside 50,000 roubles for premiums to be awarded to those adjudged the best. The winner of the first prize in this contest, which will last the whole of the year, will be that village soviet which gives the most active assistance to the state and collective farms; which best organises labour in their establishments; which works most energetically among individual peasants; and whose farms lead in fulfilment of the spring sowing campaign and the harvest season.

As a further measure, a series of educational classes for presidents of village soviets were instituted in 1935 at several urban centres.

social work. Such orders are given by strong as well as by weak chairmen of village soviets. In both cases they appear on paper in the same form, signed by the respective chairmen. But in the case of a good chairman the piece of paper would merely inform all citizens when and where to meet. The good chairman would organise his men, and make all preparations in advance ; and his official order would merely announce a decision about which everybody already knows. The order merely gives the signal to start, to get into action. It is the same as a bugle call, or the commandant's order in the army. All units are given the signal to start, and the whole army moves as one man. That is how things work when the village soviet chairman knows his job. His order falls on the ears of a prepared audience. The people know in advance what has to be done, and they get together in order to do it.

"But how does it work out if the chairman is weak ? With a weak village soviet chairman, the order is the first step he takes. A notice is put up announcing the order ; and the citizens reading it begin to query what it is all about, and what good it will do.

"It is clear, therefore, that in the first case the order would be carried out promptly because the masses would be prepared for it by soviet methods, by Party methods. In the second instance nothing would have been done in advance, the announcement would be the first step taken, and naturally things would be done haphazardly ; stern orders would be necessary, and resort to administrative measures would be called for.

"This is the difference. The first method is the soviet method, which is distinguished from methods used in any bourgeois capitalist state. Our orders, our decrees, if we regard them externally, may resemble the orders of any municipal government of a capitalist country ; or the orders of some land administration in any part of the world. But preparatory work, the preparation of the people, that is the essence of soviet work. That work is performed at meetings of your communists, at Party meetings, at meetings of active citizens, and general meetings, and the like.

"I need not go into this at great length. You know about it very well. Herein lies the essence of our democracy. Our Soviet democracy is not expressed in our official edicts. Our Soviet democracy is expressed in broad activity, when every decision is worked out by the masses, criticised hundreds of times by the collective farmers, by the individual peasants, from every possible angle. Herein lies the difference and the intricacy of the work of leaders of village soviets."¹

*The City Soviet*²

The thousand or so urban communities naturally require governing authorities essentially different from those of the seventy-odd thousand

¹ *Moscow Daily News*, weekly edition for September 22, 1933.

² The constitution and organisation of city government, with the decrees under which it works, are given, to name only works in English, in *The Soviet State*, by B. W. Maxwell,

areas into which the half a million or more rural villages, hamlets and settlements are grouped. But city soviets and village soviets have this in common, that they are the only governing bodies in the USSR that are directly elected by the inhabitants at large. Together they constitute the broad base of the pyramid by means of which man as a citizen expresses his will and his desires.

The Method of Election

The city soviet is elected at relatively small open meetings of electors in much the same manner as the village soviet. But the electoral meetings in the thousand or so urban municipalities in the USSR differ essentially from the village meetings. When, in 1905, at whose suggestion we know not, the workmen employed in the principal industrial establishments in Leningrad almost simultaneously held meetings inside the several factories to choose their own delegates to form a workers' soviet for the conduct of the general strike, they invented a form of organisation—unprecedented in any country, and at that time extra-legal—which has become, by reason of the dominating influence of the city proletariat, the foundation stone of Soviet Communism. These electoral meetings at the factories (to which similar meetings have been added for all kinds of offices and institutions, cultural as well as industrial) have, it will be seen, not a territorial but an occupational basis. The electors are summoned to attend, not as residents within the city or within a ward, precinct or parish of the city, but, irrespective of their place of residence, as persons employed in a particular factory or other institution. If the establishment is large, there are separate meetings for the several departments, branches, brigades or shifts.¹ If it is very small, it is grouped for purposes

1934, pp. 48-82; and *Soviet Rule in Russia*, by W. R. Batsell, 1929, pp. 663-687. Much additional information as to municipal administration will be found in *The Socialist Reconstruction of Moscow and other Cities in the USSR*, by L. M. Kaganovich, 1931, 125 pp., and *The Construction of the Subway and the Plan of the City of Moscow*, by the same, 1934, 58 pp. Detailed description of the municipal organisation of Moscow and Leningrad will be found at pp. 39-42.

The decree of January 20, 1933, defining the constitution and powers of the city soviets, together with a verbatim report of the discussion in the third session of the Central Executive Committee (TSIK), and a popular exposition of the terms of the decree, were published (in Russian) in a pamphlet entitled *The Tasks of the City Soviets in the Light of the New Decree*, by A. Kisselev, 64 pp., Moscow, 1933.

¹ The great tractor factory at Stalingrad in 1932 had about 130 such electoral group meetings, which, it was said, were attended by more than 95 per cent of the total number employed.

On the other hand, Narkomindel (the government department at Moscow corresponding to the British Foreign Office) is grouped together for election meetings, not only with Gosbank (analogous to the Bank of England) and several other offices, but also with a watch-repairing artel, or industrial cooperative society.

Nevertheless, though small factories or institutions may be joined together for election meetings, each establishment chooses its own member or members of the soviet, without interference by the electors from other establishments at the same meeting. Thus, in the example cited above, the staff of Narkomindel, though not numerous enough to have a meeting of their own, chose by their own votes one member and one candidate for the city soviet, with two members and one candidate for the rayon soviet.

of meeting with other small establishments of similar character. Those who work in the particular factory or institution, as soon as they become eighteen years of age, whatever their grade or salary or craft or sex—the manager, the technicians, the skilled artisans, the labourers, the factory doctors and nurses, the cleaners and the canteen cooks—all attend the same meeting. It should be noted that this is not trade union representation. All the employees are entitled to vote, and are eligible for election to the city soviet, irrespective of whether or not they are members of a trade union. Factories and other establishments or institutions, urban in character, which are situated outside the city boundaries, elect their members to soviets as if they were within a city.¹

Thus, in marked contrast with the constituencies of western Europe and America, the actual unit of the electorate in the urban communities of the USSR is everywhere a relatively small assembly of persons, usually a few hundreds and seldom exceeding one thousand, who, wherever they reside, or whatever their grade, or industrial status, or particular craft, or vocation, are, for the most part, *habitually meeting each other in daily work*. The employees of all establishments, whether manufacturing or mining, distributive or transporting, educational or medical—the theatre and the concert-hall, the hospital and the university, the bank or the government office—are for electoral purposes dealt with in the same way.

The number of members to be elected was fixed by a statute of

¹ In 1929 the number of cities was officially given as 704, whilst other industrial centres and workers' settlements treated as of urban type (such as isolated workshops and factories in rural areas and motor tractor stations) numbered 478; in 1931, 730 and 530 respectively.

It should be mentioned that there has been of recent years, especially in connection with the abolition of the former division called the Okrug, a marked tendency to include, as within the area of the city, a large number of surrounding villages, each with its own selosoviet, but sending delegates, not to the rayon council, but to the city soviet. For instance, the area already assigned to the rapidly growing city Dneproptroi (which may possibly take the name of Electropolis) with 270,000 population, rapidly doubling its numbers, is at present governed by 62 village councils, which elect representatives to the city council to sit with directly elected representatives of the workers in the urbanised part. It is proposed eventually to have six city districts each with its own directly elected council, together with an indirectly elected council to control the whole area. We learn, incidentally, that in the Middle Volga Krai in 1930 five cities, between 50,000 and 200,000 population, had had added to them no fewer than 229 selosoviets, comprising 1185 villages and hamlets, raising the aggregate population under the five city soviets from 513,000 to 950,000.

Name of City	City Population (in thousands)	Village Population (in thousands)	Total	Number of Selosoviets	Number of Villages and Hamlets
Samara . .	176	68	244	37	193
Orenburg . .	123	102	225	65	364
Pensa . .	92	106	198	52	278
Ulyanovsk . .	72	105	177	52	205
Syzran . .	50	55	105	27	145

Article, "The Liquidation of Okrugs in the Middle Volga Krai", in *Soviet Construction* (in Russian), Nos. 10, 11, 1930.)

October 24, 1925, on a complicated scale, varying with the city population, in proportion to the number of electors entitled to attend each electoral meeting. Thus—taking only a few examples of the scale—in cities not exceeding 1000 in population each meeting was to elect one delegate for each fifteen electors entitled to be present; in cities not exceeding 10,000 in population, one delegate for each fifty electors; in cities not exceeding 100,000 in population, one delegate for each one hundred and fifty electors; in Leningrad, one delegate for each 400 electors; and in Moscow, where there is so large a proportion of office workers, one delegate for each 400 factory workers and one for each 400 office workers.¹ These numbers are varied from election to election, as the population and the number of separate establishments increase, so as to keep down the number of elected persons to a reasonable figure.

It should be added that provision is made for taking separately the votes, and for hearing the views, of electors not attached to any factory, office or institution. These include the non-working invalids and the men and women superannuated or retired from age or infirmity; the home-keeping wives not working in factory, office or institution and others employed in domestic service; such independent workers, male or female, as "freelance" journalists or foreign newspaper correspondents;² authors, dramatists and musical composers not in salaried employment, independently working artists and scientific researchers of all kinds, together with such remnants of individual producers as the droshky drivers, shoeblacks and pedlars, casual washerwomen and dressmakers, etc. For all these, in each urban centre, many district meetings are held, often one in each street, having powers and functions identical with the meetings of citizens working in factories or institutions of any kind. In a great city these "non-organised" electors run into tens of thousands, and in Leningrad and Moscow even to hundreds of thousands, so that the electoral meetings summoned in order to hear their views and record their votes have to be held in all parts of the city, to the number of several hundreds.³

¹ Law of October 24, 1925; *The Soviet State*, by B. W. Maxwell, 1934, pp. 53-63; *Soviet Rule in Russia*, by W. R. Batsell, 1929, p. 672. By the RSFSR Election Instructions issued in October 1934 cities with between 400,000 and 450,000 inhabitants will to their city soviet elect one delegate to every 400 to 500 electors. In Moscow and Leningrad the city soviet will have one delegate for every 1500 electors.

² But of these only such whose attitude to the USSR "proves the fullest loyalty to the Soviet Government". In such cases the franchise is conferred by decision of the city soviet and the higher election committee, whilst no entry is made with regard to the others in the published list of the disqualified (Election Instructions for RSFSR, 1931, p. 13).

³ There is an interesting table overleaf, showing the statistics for the city of Leningrad of all these electors in their several categories, the number of members elected by them, and the proportions of Party and non-Party persons so elected (*Gorodskoy Soviet Na Novom Étape* (The New Stage of the City Soviet) (in Russian), Moscow, 1932, p. 126).

Lensoviet means the municipal authority for the whole city of Leningrad; raysoviet

The Election Procedure

There are, it must be remembered, in the USSR no political parties, using the term in the sense in which it is understood in all other countries, and consequently there is none of the usual party activity in the elections to the soviets. Nominations of individual candidates are made orally, either by themselves or by friends or admirers, there being always considerable competition and usually not a little personal rivalry. There is, of course, almost invariably a "slate" or list of candidates recommended

that for each of the eight wards or boroughs into which the city is divided. Note the very large number of housewives not occupied as wage-earners.

MEMBERSHIP OF LENSOVIET AND RAYSOVIETS

(Deputies elected from non-organised population in 1930-1931)

Groups of Population	Number of Electors	ELECTED									
		To the Lensoviet					To the Raysoviets				
		Total	Men	Women	Party Cand. and Members	Non-Party	Total	Men	Women	Party Cand. and Members	Non-Party
Housewives .	222,396	251	56	195	120	131	516	122	394	230	286
Independent artisans .	801	3	3	...	3	...	5	4	1	2	3
Peasants .	720	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	1	...
Invalids .	21,949	30	26	4	23	7	46	35	11	24	22
Members of artels (industrial co-operative) .	55,183	89	81	8	84	5	205	142	63	141	64
Others .	2,020	...	...	...	...	...	9	4	5	8	7
TOTAL .	303,069	373	166	207	230	143	782	308	474	405	377
											1155

Another table supplied to the authors by the President of the Leningrad City Soviet gives particulars as to the voters in each of the rayon soviets at the 1931 election:

RAYONS	Number of Electors who have taken part in the Election	In Them					
		Men	Women	Work-men	Clerks	House-wives	Others
Vassileostrovsky	111,085	60,201	50,884	57,332	20,167	21,126	12,460
Volodarsky .	108,419	64,448	43,971	64,231	22,997	16,006	5,185
Vyborgsky .	130,012	80,793	49,219	87,569	12,929	11,321	18,193
Moskovsky .	83,904	49,440	34,464	59,787	10,786	7,818	5,513
Nevsky .	141,449	89,451	51,998	102,055	24,630	10,659	4,105
Oktyabr'sky .	117,300	57,230	60,070	32,094	26,628	26,203	32,375
Petrogradsky .	122,536	53,334	69,202	55,983	22,355	29,502	14,696
Smol'ninsky .	258,445	130,974	127,471	82,829	98,755	53,692	23,169
	1,073,150	585,871	487,279	541,880	239,247	176,327	115,696

by the local members of the Companionship or Order styled the Communist Party, often including non-Party persons, and usually covering only a certain proportion of the vacancies ; and there may be other lists.

What is not usually understood by foreign observers is that there is, at each election, not one election meeting, but (as often in the village elections) several successive election meetings for the same electoral unit, at which candidates are nominated, discussed and either successively eliminated or carried forward to the final meeting when the last vote is taken. This, the only decisive vote, is usually unanimous (or more strictly, what in England is called *nemine contradicente*), a fact which has often led to the inference that there has been no real exercise of choice by the electorate. On the contrary, the procedure is one of elaborate preliminary sifting of the nominations by various, often many, successive votes at the previous meetings, by which the less popular candidates have been eliminated.

The Electors' Instructions

There is, moreover, another function of the successive election meetings of the electors of each electoral unit, which is regarded, as we think, rightly, as of no less importance than the actual choice of members of the soviet. This is the passing of resolutions in the nature of instructions—perhaps we should say suggestions—to the deputies or delegates to be elected, or to the soviet as a whole, or even to higher authorities. These resolutions may be proposed by any elector, but they are usually put forward by groups of electors and often by those representing particular factories or institutions. In the large cities the aggregate number of such resolutions passed at one or other of the innumerable meetings of electors runs into thousands, the subjects being of extreme diversity. They vary in importance from the most trivial details of administration, and the smallest of improvements, up to issues of municipal policy of far-reaching character. Apparently nothing is formally excluded, but we imagine that anything “counter-revolutionary” or fundamentally in opposition to the communist régime would not be risked by any opponent, or if risked, would not be tolerated by the meeting. We are told that factories vie with each other as to which can bring forward the largest number of valuable suggestions, or of suggestions that will secure the support of a majority of the meeting. We are told also that the resolutions adopted, and even those largely supported though not adopted, are carefully noted by the authorities ; and that those which are most frequently moved or adopted usually lead to appropriate action being taken, whether by the soviet or by some other authority, to remedy what is recognised as a widely felt grievance, or to meet what has been shown to be a popular desire.

It is hard for the foreigner to realise how extensive is the use made of this opportunity of the electorate to tell their delegates what they are

to do ! Fortunately the Secretary of the Moscow Committee of the Communist Party gave a lengthy analysis of these instructions. "During the elections to the Moscow Soviet in 1931," declared L. M. Kaganovich, "no fewer than one hundred thousand additions to the instructions were put forward . . . [their subjects being] housing and city enterprises, 10 per cent ; city transport, 11 per cent ; education, 16 per cent ; food supply, 18 per cent. . . . The main demands were : (1) Break up the housing trusts into cooperatives (276 enterprises, 290,000 electors) ; (2) eradicate illiteracy (90 large enterprises) ; (3) introduce polytechnical methods in all the schools (3 large enterprises) ; (4) enlarge the number of closed retail stores (595 enterprises, 400,000 electors) ; (5) improve the quality of bread (313 enterprises) ; (6) increase the number of hospitals (210 enterprises) ; (7) goods transport to work at night (80 large enterprises) ; (8) the organisation of means of transport for workers and employees, for the delivery of fuel, and for the service of the population generally (80 enterprises) ; (9) facilitate exchanges between workers employed in similar enterprises with the purpose of bringing the places of living of the workers nearer to their places of work. *Most of these suggestions have already been carried out.*"¹

There is, however, throughout the whole proceedings, and, as it seems, in all the multitudinous speeches, no formulation of opposing or competing programmes, to which the candidates proclaim allegiance ; but only a common profession of desire for efficiency in the building up of the socialist state, possibly with emphasis on the achievements or shortcomings of particular departments, and sometimes on the candidate's own qualifications for office or personal predilections. In this respect, the soviet contests seem to resemble the British and American electioneering of primitive times, before the development of the party system ; a state of things still lingering in Great Britain in nearly all the country parishes, many of the urban or rural districts and some of the smaller municipalities, which the national party organisations have not yet

¹ *The Socialist Reconstruction of Moscow and the other Cities in the USSR*, by L. M. Kaganovich, Moscow, 1932, pp. 78-81. The same speech also specified a dozen of the concrete demands made at the same election. The first two of these were as follows : "(1) the public baths to work on the uninterrupted work system from 9 A.M. to 9 P.M. ; establish a children's day at the baths ; build special baths for children ; instal mechanical laundries at the baths, so that the bather's clothes may be washed while he is bathing. (2) The construction of new tramway routes ; at each tramway stop a strict schedule to be displayed of the movements on that route ; express tram routes from the outskirts to the centre without stop ; children under fifteen to be permitted to enter the cars from the front platform ; double-deck buses to be introduced" (*ibid.* p. 79).

It is to be noted that the village meetings are equally prolific of instructions or suggestions. A report embracing a large number of village meetings throughout the RSFSR, excluding Moscow and Leningrad, during the election campaign of 1931, and those succeeding it during the ensuing two years, down to January 1, 1933, shows that these meetings sent up 26,000 concrete demands or proposals. Out of these, it is reported that more than 17,000, being about 60 per cent, were more or less carried into effect ("Mass Work of the Soviets in the Third and Fourth Years of the First Five-Year Plan" (in Russian), pp. 25-26, by the accounting information department under the presidium of the Central Executive Committee (VTSIK) of the RSFSR).

reached or from which they have been deliberately excluded. What is remarkable in the soviet elections, in the absence of what Britain and America mean by party strife, is the width of public interest that they excite, the amount of discussion that takes place, and the very high percentage of the electorate that records its vote. We are told, for instance, that in the USSR there is never such a thing as an uncontested election, either for the village or the city soviets.¹

A Moscow Election

We may cite, as an outstanding example of these soviet elections—doubtless an extreme instance, not necessarily typical of the smaller cities—that of the choice of the Moscow City Soviet and of its eight rayon soviets in 1931. There were 2542 members (or substitutes in case of absence)² to be elected to the governing bodies of this city of some three million inhabitants. The total number of men and women more or less formally nominated is not recorded, but they evidently numbered many thousands. The percentage of votes cast to the total electorate is given as 94.1, which we should take the liberty of calling an incredible figure, if it were calculated as it would be in Britain or America.³ What is

¹ British readers will be aware that in the United Kingdom a large majority of the elections for parish councils are uncontested; of the elections of rural district councils a considerable proportion are always uncontested; of those for urban district councils many are uncontested. The same is true of the elections for the town councils in a considerable number of wards in the municipal boroughs, and of those for the county councils in most of the rural county districts, as well as in many of the electoral areas in London for county and metropolitan borough councils. Even for the House of Commons there are always a number of constituencies in which the election is uncontested. Such an absence of the opportunity of "participation" would be considered in the USSR to be gravely "undemocratic", as well as socially injurious.

² It is customary for the electors to elect, especially to bodies of importance, not merely the prescribed number of members, but also a certain number of substitutes or alternates, usually termed "candidates" (not exceeding one-third of the number of members), who may automatically be appointed as members in place of members disabled or prevented from attendance. Such substitutes or alternates are entitled to attend the meetings of the elected body as guests, and even to obtain their expenses of travelling to the place of meeting, although they cannot vote. They may be consulted and give advice, and they may even be allowed to volunteer their opinions.

³ Explanations of such an apparently impossible percentage of voters to electorate may be found in the fact that there is, under Soviet Communism, as already explained, no such obstacle to universal voting as a register of electors always more or less "stale". In the United Kingdom no one can vote at an election whose name is not included in a register now made up only once a year, on the basis of the completion of three months' residence at a specified address, and the arrival of the elector's twenty-first birthday, both prior to a fixed date, which may actually prove to be seventeen months previous to the election day! A large percentage of the registered electors are always found to have died or removed from the district, whilst newcomers and persons who have newly reached the qualifying age cannot vote. In the United States, although the method of compiling the register is different from that in the United Kingdom, the effect, in preventing a large proportion of those over twenty-one from voting, is substantially similar. In the USSR the man or woman reaching eighteen on the day of the election, and actually working on that day in the factory or institution, can at once vote; whilst those who have died or removed do not clog the electorate, or affect the percentage of actual voters to the electorate.

It is reported that the average percentage of voters to the electorate, in all the cities

more interesting is the detailed description of the efforts made both to educate the electors to and induce them to vote. The city evidently resembled, during several weeks, a British city in the last days of a hotly contested parliamentary election. There was the same elaborate display of printed and illustrated posters. There were flashing electric signs and illuminated statuary groups in plaster emphasising particular slogans. Besides the innumerable small meetings in the factories and institutions of all kinds, there were many large meetings in all parts of the city, open to all comers, at which speeches were made by candidates and other "spellbinders". The achievements and projects of the various departments of the municipal administration were described. The extensive shortcomings and patent errors were usually not explained away but frankly admitted and criticised. Questions were answered and complaints noted. There were processions through the streets, with banners and bands. In every factory or workshop, every school or college, every hospital or institution of any kind, repeated personal appeals were made to every elector to cast his vote. Foreign residents, we are told, asked with amazement why so much trouble was taken, and so much expense incurred, when no party issues were at stake, no party feeling was involved and no party gain could be made. The answer was that Soviet Communism was based on universal participation in public administration—participation by intelligent understanding of the whole function of the state, in which the casting of a vote for this candidate or that, according to personal preference, was but the final and conclusive act. "Such", it was declared, "was soviet democracy, then in its fourteenth year. How much more real", it was asserted, "than parliamentary democracy in other lands." In the end, out of the 2542 members or substitutes elected, either to the city soviet or to the rayon soviets, it was reported that 604 were women; 358 were doctors, engineers or clerical workers; and the rest, about 1400, were manual workers. Just about two-thirds of the total were members, or candidates for membership, of the Communist Party or of the League of Communist Youth (Comsomols); whilst about one-third were "non-Party", that is to say, unconnected with this dominant Order.¹

It is, of course, not denied that the members of the Communist Party, together with its probationary members (called candidates), and the League of Communist Youth (Comsomols), make up the bulk of the "activists", to whose zeal and exertions the "liveliness" of the elections is due. At Moscow in 1931 it was they who saw to it that two-thirds of all the candidates who survived to the final votes belonged to the all-powerful communist organisation, and it was doubtless to their special efforts that these nominees owed their success. But it was evidently by intention

of the USSR, was 84. In the several constituent republics the percentage varied between 70.9 in that of Uzbekistan and 90.6 in the Ukraine.

¹ Summarised from article on "The Soviet Elections" by D. Zaslavsky (of Moscow) in *International Press Correspondence*, 1931, pp. 90-91.

that room was left for a substantial minority of "non-Party" candidates to be elected.¹ The membership of the soviets is practically never wholly composed of docile adherents of the government. There are, indeed, constantly recurring complaints of the extent to which disaffected persons, or even "counter-revolutionaries", find their way into these councils, especially the rural soviets, to such an extent as even to impair their efficiency in "building up the socialist state". But though such persons may become candidates, may canvass quietly for votes among their friends, and may even secure election, they do not, in their candidatures, stand as opponents of the established order of things, or proclaim their preference for any contrary policy. When—as occasionally happens even in the cities, and more frequently than not in the rural soviets²—they even find themselves in a majority, they may hang back and cause trouble, leading often to their partial elimination at a subsequent election.

We add to the foregoing description an account of a previous Moscow election as seen from a textile factory, and of the procedure of electing its delegates to the Moscow City and rayon soviets, by an experienced British publicist who had more than once visited the USSR. This investigation took place in 1926, prior to the Five-Year Plan; at a time of the New Economic Policy, when many of the workers were being sweated by small profit-making employers and the Labour Exchanges were busy trying to place demobilised Red Army men and others who had failed, during this partial reversion to private enterprise, to get work. "On the walls of the factory when I visited it, some days before the actual election, two lists of candidates had been posted, who sought election to the Moscow City Soviet, and to the less important rayon [ward] soviet. There were also shorter lists of 'substitutes' who would take the places

¹ The statistical table in the footnote to p. 29 shows that, in the Leningrad election in 1930, slightly more than one-half of the members elected by the "non-organised" electors (namely, those not voting at the factories or other establishments) were Party members.

² The total number of members of the Communist Party in the village soviets was stated in a report to amount in 1932 to no more than 15 per cent (225,582 out of a total of 1,510,800), and this was an increase over the 9 per cent at which it stood in 1927 (116,774 out of 1,112,000). In 1935 they numbered 18.9 per cent (236,853 out of a total of 1,252,134).

In the city soviets, of which there now are over one thousand, there were reported to be 166,900 members in 1932 as compared with 122,572 in 1927. Among these the proportion of members of the Communist Party was just upon one-half; their number having risen in the five years from 54,927 to 82,952. Rather more than two-fifths of these various totals were reported to be manual working wage-earners, the remaining being mostly clerical employees of various grades, or engineers and other technicians, with a few doctors, journalists and lawyers. In 1935 the proportions of Party members and Comsomols in the city soviets were provisionally given as 43.1 per cent and 11.2 per cent respectively.

It should be added that women are now members of nearly every soviet, whether rural or urban, to the aggregate number, as it was officially reported in 1932, of 316,690 (as compared with 151,298 in 1927), being 21 per cent of the total membership (as compared with less than 14 per cent in 1927). In very many cases women are elected to the presidency of the soviet.

of the elected members in case of death or prolonged absence on other duties. The factory had the right to return one delegate for each 600 of its workers; its allowance was, in fact, fourteen members. The singularity of this list was that it contained fifteen names. At their head stood Lenin. He had been their member while he lived, and they still paid to his memory this touching homage. They would have laughed unpleasantly at the orthodox conception of immortality, but for them the dead hero still lived in his works, and in the hearts of his followers. I thought of the Greek fishermen of the Aegean isles, who will hail one another after a storm, with the traditional greeting 'Alexander lives and reigns'. After Lenin's name came that of Rykov, his successor as chairman of the Council of Commissars (the Russian cabinet). This factory had been the pioneer in the revolutionary struggle, and it claimed the honour of returning the active head of the Soviet administration as its senior member. The remaining names were all those of workers or former workers in the factory. Seven of the fourteen were, as the list showed, members of the Communist Party; one was a member of the Communist League of Youth, and the rest were 'non-Party'. Three of the fourteen were women.

"Here, then, was the official list, containing a bare majority of professed Communists presented to the electors for their ratification. There was no alternative list. By what method had it been compiled? The first step is that each member of last year's soviet (the elections are annual)¹ who desires to stand again, presents a report on his or her activity. A meeting then takes place between the Works Council [this is the factory committee] and the 300 delegates, who represent small groups of the various categories of workers. At this meeting names are put forward, and there often follows a thorough discussion of the record and reputation of each. There is usually a vote on each name. In this way the first draft of the official list is 'compiled' under the supervision of the Works Council [factory committee]. It then goes before separate meetings of the various crafts [query workshops] in the factory, and at these it may be modified. In its final form it is a selection presented by the Works Council to a general meeting of all the workers in the factory. At this general meeting it is still theoretically possible to oppose any name in the list and to put forward another name to replace it; but of this right the electors rarely avail themselves, for the good reason that the preliminary procedure by which the list is prepared does furnish some guarantee that it corresponds, on the whole, with the wishes of the electors. They are not consciously settling big issues of national policy, nor are they even directly choosing legislators. They are choosing average, trustworthy citizens, who will see that the administrative machine of the city runs efficiently for the common good of the working population. The atmosphere of the election and, indeed, of debates in the soviets themselves, is strangely remote from 'politics' as western democracies con-

¹ Now triennial (1935).

ceive them. A big family, animated by a single purpose, sits down on these occasions to administer its common property.

"The factory produces its own newspaper, *The Spur*, which appears fortnightly and is written entirely by workers under the direction of its branch of the Communist Party. Its contents during the election week are, perhaps, as good a sample as one could find of soviet politics, as the average town worker sees them.

"The number opens with a leading article in which every elector is summoned to take part in the elections. . . . 'Comrades, remember Il'ych's [Lenin's] watchword. The time is ripe for every servant-girl, while she is still in the kitchen, to learn how to govern Russia. The tasks before us are the practical work of building houses and increasing our output. We have many a hardship still to endure, and Russia needs you all. If you feel yourselves ill-off, then elect active members of the soviet to better your case. You are yourselves responsible for your own lot. Don't leave the work to others. Be bold, choose conscientious men who will carry out Lenin's ideas, and then be sure that your hardships will vanish and poverty disappear.'

"The heavy, business-like part of the election literature consisted in the official report of the Communist Party on the year's work of the Moscow Soviet. It claimed that the Party had fulfilled its promises. It had increased the output of industry, bettered the conditions of the workers, and kept alive the unity between workers and peasants. . . .

"The peroration of this very practical document boasted that these results were due to the participation of the 'broad masses' (a characteristic Russian phrase) in the work of government, 'a thing possible only under the soviet system'.

"The similar report on the work of the Ward Soviet was on much the same lines. It contained one reference, however, to the aesthetic side of life—trees had been planted to beautify the streets. It noted considerable activity in summoning small private employers (*kustari*) for breaches of the labour code. The rest of the election news consisted of the reports of some of the retiring members of the soviet. . . .

"'No. 1 [a woman] was responsible for inspecting the houses of the old-age pensioners. She got their daily ration of white bread increased by half a pound, and saw that better meals were provided for the consumptives. She was distressed by conditions at the Labour Exchange; many demobilised Red Army men had failed for two years to get work; some workers fainted while waiting at the Exchange; the present manager is not the right man for this post.

"'No. 2 [a man] occupied himself with education, and stressed his insistence that preference should always be given to the children of the workers.

"'No. 3 [a woman] claims that, as the result of her inspection of eighteen schools, the expenditure on food, per month, per child, was raised from fifteen to twenty-three roubles.

“ ‘No. 4 [a man] worked in the health section. He advocated a dispensary for venereal diseases and an increase in the number of beds both for adults and children. He was responsible for sending sick children to Yalta in the Crimea, and got an additional dispensary opened for the tuberculous, making the thirteenth in our district. He got a workshop for winter use built in the home for children addicted to drugs (these pitiable little wretches are mainly orphans of the civil war and the famine, who for a time ran wild in the towns). He also insisted that less monotonous work (‘‘ fancy ’’ sewing instead of making sacks) should be provided for the women who are being reclaimed in the home for prostitutes.

“ ‘No. 5 [a woman] insisted that bed-linen should be changed fortnightly instead of monthly in the eye hospital.

“ ‘No. 6 [a man] found many cases in small private workshops in which lads under eighteen were working over eight hours ; the employers were prosecuted.

“ ‘No. 7 [a woman] inspected five factories and found one in which there was no hospital. The workers had to walk seven versts to the nearest. This was remedied.’ ”¹

The Organisation of the City Soviet

The method of election adopted from the start for the city soviet—the separate choice of one or more delegates by the staff of each enterprise—even the smallest—has given that body a membership and a character entirely different from those of the municipal councils of Great Britain or the United States. In any considerable city of the USSR the city soviet is composed of an unwieldy mass of men and women delegates without fixed total, the numbers increasing at each election with the perpetual multiplication of establishments of every kind. With the addition of 33 per cent of candidates or substitutes, who are entitled to attend, the plenum of the city soviet runs into hundreds, and in the cases of Moscow and Leningrad to more than two thousand. Such a body has necessarily to entrust its powers and functions to an executive committee, which, again, is too large for executive action, and therefore leaves the daily work to a presidium of something like a dozen members, in whom the day-by-day administration of the city resides, and who give their whole time and attention to their municipal duties.

On the other hand, again in contrast with the western municipalities, much less use is made in the cities of the USSR of that trained, permanent and salaried staff by whom in most other countries the actual work of municipal administration is conducted. In the absence of such a staff, which is only now beginning to appear in the USSR, the city soviets have made the most of that principle of the widest possible participation of the whole people in the work of government which is so characteristic of Soviet Communism. The city soviet appoints an ever-increasing number

¹ *How the Soviets Work*, by H. N. Brailsford, 1927, pp. 34-40.

of sections or committees, each consisting of a small proportion of the elected members or candidates, to whom are joined an indefinite number of volunteers drawn from outstanding and "activist" citizens of either sex and of the most varied positions and occupations. Each section consists of several scores of members; occasionally even of hundreds, and in Moscow and Leningrad sometimes running up to a thousand or so; all of whom undertake to spend hours every week in their own localities in gratuitously doing detailed administrative work, much of which would in England and America be carried out by a salaried staff of inspectors, relieving officers, investigators, school attendance officers, collectors and what not.

It must be said that the organisation of the city soviets is still inchoate, ranging from Moscow and Leningrad downwards to quite primitive conditions in some of the smaller cities. "The decree of 1925 and subsequent legislation provided for . . . six permanent committees (or sections), namely, communal economy, financial budgetary business, education, public health, cooperative trade and workman-peasant inspection. Other committees (or sections) may be appointed by local soviets in accordance with their needs. In most city soviets there are ten or more additional committees (or sections) and they are known as administrative, cultural, sanitary, judicial, trade, social security, etc. Deputies (or delegates) may select the committees (or sections) they prefer to join, but under some conditions they may be appointed to committees (or sections) not of their own choice." We must content ourselves with descriptions of Moscow and Leningrad.

Moscow

The plenum of the Moscow City Soviet consisted, in 1934, of 2206 triennially elected members, with half a dozen others added by the presidium, and with 450 elected candidates or substitutes. About 1750 were Party members, whilst about 900 were non-Party. This plenum meets ten or twelve times a year.¹ It elects an Executive Committee (Ispolkom) of 50 members, which is summoned to meet at irregular intervals about three or four times a year, when some special business requires its attention. But the effective municipal executive is the presidium of fifteen members, with six candidates or substitutes, elected by the Executive Committee (Ispolkom), subject to the approval of the plenum, and meeting

¹ "The difference between our soviets and bourgeois democratic municipalities consists not only in the fact that it is not the nobles, manufacturers, bankers and houseowners, and their lackeys, who sit on our soviets but working men and working women, but also in the very methods of working. The soviet is a permanently functioning legislative organisation, which controls and supervises not only the enterprises belonging to the city, but all other economic activities carried on within its territory. Much has been done in recent years to reconstruct the work of the soviets. The sections of the soviets are bodies that supervise and direct the various branches of city enterprise. . . . The work must be raised to higher levels. Ceremonial plenary sessions are still widely practised in our soviets: this practice must be discontinued" (*The Socialist Reconstruction of Moscow and other Cities in the USSR*, by L. M. Kaganovich, Moscow, 1931, pp. 78-79).

regularly nearly every week. Practically all important decisions are taken by the presidium. On a few issues of special importance or difficulty, the presidium consults the Executive Committee, which sometimes has matters under enquiry and consideration for several months.¹ Usually the decisions of the presidium are reported direct to the plenum, by which they are almost invariably ratified, although sometimes not without considerable discussion.

The majority of the members of the plenum man the sections, or, as we should say, the committees, which supervise the various branches of municipal administration. Every member is required to serve on at least one section, according to his choice, the numbers being unlimited, and varying with the popularity of the subject. In 1934 there were twenty-eight such sections, concerned respectively with finance, education, theatres and cinemas, health, housing, building projects, allocation of sites, supplies and trade, municipal shops, the municipal farms, city planning, construction, municipal heating, militia (police) and fire brigade, courts of justice, establishment, archives, statistics, the legal department, and sundry other matters; together with half a dozen charged with the supervision of the special trusts, or boards, to which is delegated the routine administration of such municipal enterprises as the tramways, the main drainage system, the underground railway works, the licensing of automobiles, and the management of dwelling-houses. Each section has a membership varying from about 40 to three or four times that number. All of them meet about once a month, but each elects a bureau of a few members who meet once every five days.

Leningrad

The Leningrad City Soviet, which is housed in the Smolny Institute, of revolutionary fame, has an even larger membership than that of Moscow. Its plenum consists of over 3000 triennially elected deputies, with about 1000 elected candidates or substitutes. It has a presidium of 17 deputies and 8 candidates, which meets nearly every week. Unlike Moscow, Leningrad has now no executive committee (Ispolkom); and the presidium reports in all cases direct to the plenum. There are nearly 30 sections or committees, among which the members of the plenum distribute themselves according to choice. In the summer these sections meet once a month, but in the winter only three times every two months.²

It should be added that in Moscow and Leningrad, and often in other cities, the members and candidates elected to the municipal soviet by the several brigades, shifts or workshops of a large factory habitually combine into an extra-legal standing committee, which takes under its

¹ This was the case with the project for *metrostroi*, the extensive underground railway, which the city soviet is constructing by direct employment, and which was under examination for many months.

² See table on opposite page.

- DISTRIBUTION OF MEMBERS OF THE LENINGRAD SOVIET ACCORDING TO THEIR SOCIAL STANDING
(1934)

LENINGRAD	Total	SOCIAL STANDING													
		Total Number of Workmen	In Them		Clerks	Students	Housewives	Kustars	Peasants [®]	Red Army Men	" Kornpolits "	Unemployed	Invalids	Udarniks	Others
Members	2282	1524	810	714	391	89	121	..	..	28	120	2	7	1718	..
Candidates	1202	685	510	175	223	62	156	..	..	25	40	1	4	872	6

special care the municipal interests of all the workers employed in the factory as a whole, with those of their families. They see to the housing, the sanitation, the medical services, the arrangements for holidays and organised recreation, the provision of nurseries and kindergartens, schools and technicums. They deal with every sort of complaint or criticism. It is interesting to note that they do not confine their activities to what are essentially subjects of municipal government. They invade the sphere of action of the factory committee, with which they nevertheless cooperate without friction or jealousy. They investigate cases of waste or breakdown. They press for continuity and increase of output. They deal with absenteeism and complaints against foremen. In every respect they act in the factory as an additional influence for contentment and efficiency.

The Rayons in the Cities

But this is not all the complication of the municipal structure. In nearly all the cities having populations of 100,000, and in a few others by special authorisation of the Central Executive Committee (TSIK) of the constituent or autonomous republic (or autonomous krai or oblast), subordinate rayon soviets may be elected by the several rayons (or, as we should say, wards or boroughs) into which the city can be divided for this purpose. Thus, Moscow has 10 rayon soviets, Leningrad 8, Baku 7, and Gorki (formerly Nizhni-Novgorod) 8. In some cases (as at Gorki) one or other of the rayons may include new industrial districts growing up outside the city boundary. In other cases, on the principle of cultural autonomy, the rayon may be formed out of an area within the city inhabited mainly by the racial "national minority". Elections to the rayon soviets are held quite independently of the election to the city soviet itself, but on the same franchise; and, for convenience, within the period of the same election campaign, and often on the same day. It is permissible but unusual for the same person to be elected to both city and rayon soviet. The rayon soviets are charged by the city soviet with much of the detailed municipal administration of their own areas, especially the supervision and management of the local institutions, and of the local sanitation. Each rayon soviet appoints its own presidium of a few members, and various sections of local inhabitants for specific functions, exactly like those of the city soviet.¹ Their finances form part of the budget of the city soviet; and this control over finance involves their general subordination to, and control by, the financial organisation of that body. The competition of the different rayons among themselves in order to obtain approval for their several projects of additional local amenities, leads to keen discussion in the plenum and Ispolkom.

It must be said that, although great improvements have been made, there is considerable dissatisfaction with the administration of the city rayon soviets and their sections. Kaganovich did not shrink, in 1934,

¹ See table on opposite page.

THE DISTRIBUTION OF MEMBERS OF THE LENINGRAD RAYON SOVIETS ACCORDING TO THEIR SOCIAL STANDING
(Election of 1931)

RAYON SOVIETS	Total	SOCIAL STANDING											
		Total Number of Workmen	In Them		Clerks	Students	Housewives	Kustars	Peasants	Red Army Men	"Kompolls"	Unemployed	Invalids
			Industrial Workmen	Employed in Public Administration and Economic Institutions and by Election and Udarlichestvo									
Members of the Soviets :													
Vassileostrovsky	454	262	218	41	109	39	32	..	.. 2	12	..	..	..
Volodarsky	478	370	287	83	51	8	34	..	..	13	..	..	..
Vyborgsky	598	373	315	58	158	44	23	..	..	..	..	..	..
Moskovsky	347	231	196	35	80	7	10	..	..	18	..	..	1
Nevsky	563	421	325	96	101	6	23	..	..	3	..	..	9
Oktyabr'sky	512	208	149	59	195	47	31	.. 2	..	29	..	..	..
Petrogradsky	412	194	166	28	137	20	38	1	1	21	..	..	..
Smol'ninsky	1078	559	277	282	334	72	71	5	..	37	..	..	..
TOTAL	4442	2618	1933	682	1165	243	262	8	3	133	..	..	10
Candidates of the Soviets :													
Vassileostrovsky	164	87	87	..	33	13	22	..	..	9	..	..	.. 1
Volodarsky	172	113	96	17	27	5	19	..	..	7	..	..	..
Vyborgsky	192	121	111	10	37	18	16	..	..	..	..	..	.. 1
Moskovsky	129	82	81	1	31	1	8	..	..	.. 6	..	..	.. 1
Nevsky	214	149	126	23	38	4	16	..	..	..	..	..	.. 7
Oktyabr'sky	164	58	48	10	59	13	24	..	..	..	..	..	..
Petrogradsky	152	90	81	9	30	..	24	..	2	6	..	..	..
Smol'ninsky	346	158	114	44	119	17	43	..	..	9	..	..	..
TOTAL	1533	858	744	114	374	71	172	..	2	47	..	..	9

from publicly declaring that "the district soviets are still working poorly on the improvement of their districts; they still do not show, and they do not feel themselves, that they are the masters of their districts in the full sense of the word. A most important task is to bring the district soviets closer to the masses of the population which they serve. In every corner of the district there must be a master, who would know all the needs of the district and make them his daily concern. There should be a master who pays attention to the good order of his street and house; there should be a master who, loving his section, his street, would make it his concern to fight against hooliganism, bad house management, untidiness and lack of culture. If the Moscow soviet and the district soviets are to begin this big undertaking, it is apparent that sub-district soviets must be created. The districts containing up to 400,000 population are too big—each district is a whole large city in itself. It is hard to cover and keep account of the needs of such a big district from one centre. If there are sub-district soviets covering several streets, if the soviet deputies and the soviet section leaders work actively in the sub-district soviets, becoming fighters for their street, their sidewalk, their court, the improvement of Moscow will go on apace."¹

The Subbotniki in the Cities

Both city soviets and, in the larger cities, rayon soviets, together with the numerous sections that they appoint, are constantly falling behind in the vast work involved in any municipal administration unprovided with an extensive and competent salaried staff. These shortcomings are, to some extent, made good by the spasmodic outbursts of energy by the subbotniki ("Saturday-ers"), who, as we shall describe in a subsequent chapter,² volunteer gratuitously to clear away accumulations of work which would otherwise not be done in time. It is estimated that in the aggregate, apart from such salaried staff as exists, as many as 50,000 citizens are, at any moment, participating in the municipal administration of Moscow, and nearly as many in that of Leningrad.³

Indirect Election

In describing the basic foundation of the soviet hierarchy we have had a lengthy but a relatively easy task. Much more difficult is it to describe,

¹ *The Construction of the Subway and the Plan for the City of Moscow*, by L. M. Kagano-vich, 1934, pp. 56-57.

² "In Place of Profit", Chapter IX. in Part II.

³ It should be added that the members of the city and rayon soviets receive no payment for their services as members. The majority of them, being employed at wages or salaries, are entitled to take "time off" from the employment, without loss of pay, whenever they are engaged on their municipal duties. Those of them who have no wage or salary (such as the independent handicraftsmen) may receive from the soviet compensation for "lost time" at rates fixed by the soviet authorities. Housekeeping wives, supported by their husbands, continue to be supported by them, and are assumed (like the wage-earners) merely to take "time off" for their municipal duties, which they perform as part of the voluntary social work expected from every loyal citizen.

or even precisely to understand, the complicated political edifice that has been erected on that foundation. The first few congresses to which the People's Commissars reported their proceedings, and to which they addressed their orations, consisted only of delegates from an indefinite number of city and village soviets, being such as found themselves able to attend at the capital. They were drawn during the Civil War from a comparatively small and shifting area, which at one time sank to little more than a relatively narrow corridor of territory between Leningrad and Moscow. The available territory was, in fact, not only restricted by the political separation of the Ukraine and Transcaucasia, but also dependent month by month, during two whole years, on the fluctuating success of the Red Army in pushing back the various White Armies, subsidised and strengthened, as these were, by the munitions, officers and military contingents supplied by half a dozen foreign governments. But when, at the end of 1920, nearly the whole territory of what is now the USSR was cleared of hostile forces,¹ Lenin and his colleagues were confronted with the problem of constructing a firm and stable government from the whole continent extending from the Baltic to the Pacific, and from the Arctic Ocean to the Black Sea, with more than a hundred millions of inhabitants, two-thirds of the whole unable even to read, belonging to many different races, languages and religions, including numerous nomadic and barbaric tribes without any written language, some of them still in the stage of animism and magic. Even if the Bolsheviks had been enthusiastic believers in western liberalism, with its faith in a parliament directly elected by universal suffrage and the ballot-box, such a political constitution was plainly impracticable for the vast heterogeneous hordes with which they had to deal. But the Bolsheviks had become fervent believers in the plan of basing the whole constitution, not on the anonymous mass voting of huge electoral constituencies, but on a large number of relatively small meetings of neighbours and associates in work, at which there could be an intimate discussion of the issues in which the people were interested, and about which they had views of their own. At these meetings the people could choose, to represent their wishes, someone whom they actually knew. Only in this way, Lenin believed, could all these "deaf villages" and primitive communities be taught the art of representative government, and at the same time be held together a unitary state. Many persons thought, at first, that it would suffice to constitute a federal republic of city and village soviets, to be governed by an All-Russian Congress of delegates or deputies from the innumerable little soviets throughout the whole area. This, in fact, was what was indicated in the resolutions "on the federal institutions of the Russian republic" adopted by the "Third All-Russian Congress of Workers', Soldiers', Peasants' and Kazaks' Deputies", on January 18, 1918, as the plan on which the Central Executive Committee (TSIK) was to draft "these fundamental

¹ The Japanese did not evacuate Vladivostok until 1922, and the northern half of the island of Sakhalin not until 1925.

principles of the constitution" for submission to the next All-Russian Congress.¹ When, however, the drafting committees got to work, it became evident that such a conception was unduly simple. To represent directly in any central congress all the small meetings in so huge an area, with so colossal a population, was plainly impracticable. Moreover, the administration of provincial affairs affecting more than one local soviet had also to be provided for, and this mass of detail could not be brought to Moscow. Further, many of the districts, both small and large, clung desperately to their local autonomy, which had perforce to be conceded. Yet it was no less indispensable to establish a supreme government of strength and stability, if only to deal with such subjects as foreign relations, defence, transport and communications, and so on. Moreover, the Bolsheviks attached paramount importance to their peculiar conception—never before considered by framers of constitutions—of an economic community based upon the suppression of the landlord and the capitalist, and all forms of profit-making. This could be ensured only by a powerful and supreme central authority. To harmonise and achieve all these ends involved protracted consultations before even the first fundamental law was agreed to on July 10, 1918. It took four more years of congresses and discussions to get adopted the successive elaborations and amendments out of which emerged in 1922–1923, in relatively stable form, the constitution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

The solution of the unprecedented constitutional problem with which the Bolsheviks were faced was found, as early as the spring of 1918, in the adoption, in the manner and on a scale never before attempted, of the principle of indirect election, which has continued unchanged down to the present day (1935); but of which a drastic alteration is now under consideration. As adopted in 1918, the directly elected primary soviets in addition to governing their own areas were to choose deputies or delegates to higher congresses of soviets governing larger areas. Each of these higher congresses of soviets, besides administering the affairs of its own district—whether we think of it as county, canton or province, *kreis* or *département*—was to choose deputies or delegates to yet higher assemblies, governing even larger areas; and these again ultimately sending their own representatives to constitute the All-Union Congress of Soviets, which was to be the supreme governing authority for the whole Soviet Union.

This sounds, to a Briton or an American, a complicated scheme for providing for the representation of "Man as a Citizen". But there are

¹ *Soviet Rule in Russia*, by W. R. Batsell, 1929, p. 789. We may perhaps regard this conception as an echo of the idea of Bakunin that, when the strong central governments of the European states had been overthrown, they would be succeeded only by congeries of free associations of the workers in each neighbourhood, which might be loosely federated in groups for common purposes. We are told that Prince Peter Kropotkin, who had re-entered Russia after the 1917 revolution, and who sympathised with Bakunin's ideas as to the necessary minimum of governmental organisation, had formed in Moscow a committee of his friends to discuss the proposed constitution, and their views were forcibly urged on others who were influentially concerned with the drafting.

many more complications yet to be unravelled. The soviet constitution, as will be seen, includes not only an assembly for the government of the whole undivided community inhabiting one-sixth of the entire land-surface of the globe, but also a graded hierarchy of local governing bodies, at once legislative and executive, for the administration of the affairs peculiar to areas of different magnitudes and diverse characteristics. And it does more than this. It provides also a series of independent assemblies for the separate governments of areas, large or small—whether we think of them as tribes or nations, states or republics—inhabited by peoples who feel themselves to constitute distinct nationalities. We have, in fact, in the USSR a unique constitutional form which combines, in one and the same hierarchy, the organs of both local and central government, of both legislature and executive, of both unitary state and federation.

How the Pyramid was Built

We need not trouble the reader with the successive changes since 1918 in the details of the indirectly elected hierarchy. The tsarist local governing authorities, whether gubernia, zemstvo, uезд or volost, quickly fell to pieces at the Revolution. For years chaos reigned in varying degree from place to place; and each soviet, in city or village, assumed whatever powers it wanted, and dealt with the affairs of its own areas as it chose. Gradually things were straightened out by the central government, and formulated by successive All-Union Congresses of Soviets. Municipal authorities were established for the cities. The village soviet (selosoviet) entirely replaced the Mir. The three old divisions of tsarist local government, whether gubernia (province), uезд (county) or volost (rural district), were eventually superseded by two new ones, formed, to some extent, along lines of economic characteristics, and termed oblast or krai,¹ and rayon.² No less important, as we shall presently describe, was the vital

¹ The terms oblast and krai are applied indiscriminately, according to local usage. But we are told that, strictly speaking, an oblast is a newly established district containing no autonomous area. Where an autonomous area peopled mainly by a national minority exists as an enclave within the district the proper term is krai. The North Caucasian krai contains as many as seven autonomous areas.

Among other works in Russian we may cite *The Soviet State: the Origins and the Development of the Constitution of the USSR*, by V. I. Ignatiev, 1928, 146 pp.; *The USSR, and the Union's Republics*, by S. A. Kotlyarevsky, 139 pp.; *The Soviet Autonomous Oblasts and Republics*, by K. Arkhipov, 123 pp.

² There was at first an additional tier of councils, termed the okrug soviet, for an area roughly corresponding to that of the old volost, in which both village soviets and city soviets were represented. This was found inconvenient, as leaving too little scope for the development of the rayon soviet in enlivening the village soviets; and as encouraging too much bureaucratic control, to which the city soviet especially objected. It was decided by the Central Committee of the Communist Party by a decree of July 6, 1930, to "liquidate" the okrugs and to wind them up by October 1, 1930. The decision was ratified by the Sixteenth Party Congress (*Political Report to the Sixteenth Party Congress of the Russian Communist Party*, by Josef Stalin, 1930, pp. 125-129). But, in the vast area of the USSR, such changes take time to become universal. In 1934 there were still functioning 22 okrugs.

policy of cultural autonomy and, wherever practicable, native self-government for the scores of separate nationalities scattered over the Eurasian continent. What is of interest is that all these different kinds and grades of governing bodies find places in the main soviet hierarchy, and spring ultimately from the same base of primary soviets. The simple pyramid, springing by indirect election from the broad foundation of some 75,000 directly elected primary soviets of village or city, turns out to have, not merely one supreme apex in the All-Union Congress of Soviets, but also a number of separate minor apices, not only in the congresses of soviets of the autonomous republics or oblasts, but also in those of the seven (or rather nine) federated constituent republics,¹ of which we must give some description before tackling the supreme government of the Union.

The Rayon and the Oblast

There are, accordingly, two main strands in the closely knit constitutional fabric of Soviet Communism: the direct choice, by adult suffrage, at open meetings of fellow-workers or neighbours, of people's deputies or delegates; and the formation, by indirect election from below, of a pyramidal series of superior authorities. We may observe in passing that, as we shall presently describe, the same two strands run through all the four divisions of the representative system of Soviet Communism, whether it is dealing with "Man as a Citizen", or with "Man as a Producer", or with "Man as a Consumer", or with "Man as a Super-citizen engaged in the Vocation of Leadership".

We now resume our description of the government of Man as a Citizen in the successive tiers of councils above the village or small city soviet,²

¹ These are the RSFSR (Russia proper with Siberia); the Ukraine; White Russia; the Transcaucasian Federation (which is a union of three—Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia); Turkestan; Tadzhikistan and Uzbekistan.

The trouble about a metaphor is that it is never completely accurate as a description! One of the authors objects that it is a peculiarity of the soviet pyramid that its supreme apex is not flanked by parallel minor apices; these are all actually included inside the supreme apex, which they help to support, and moreover some of these minor apices have other still smaller pyramidal apices within themselves! A chart will enable the student to get a clearer vision of this amazingly complicated constitution than is practicable through the written word (see the diagram in the Appendix to Part I.).

² It adds to the complication that the names and areas of the tiers of councils have been, during the past few years, in process of change. This economic "rayonising" of the USSR was contemplated immediately after the end of the Civil War, but was not seriously undertaken until 1928, when it was needed for the most effective formulation of the First Five-Year Plan. It was based on the conception of four different types. There were to be industrial rayons (as in the Leningrad oblast, or in the Donets Basin of the Ukraine). There were to be agricultural rayons (as in the Black Soil region, the Middle Volga, the south-west part of the Ukraine or in Kazakstan). There had also to be mixed rayons, which were necessarily both industrial and agricultural (as in North Caucasus, the Lower Volga krai, the Crimea). There were also timber rayons (as in Northern Asia). (See an instructive section, in Russian, in *The Five-Year Plan of the National Economy Construction of the USSR*, vol. iii., "The Rayon Divisions of the Plan", 1929.) Under this "rayonising", what were, under the tsarist régime, 56 gubernia (provinces), 476 uезд (cantons or counties) and 10,606 volost (rural districts), have been reorganised into 100 oblasts (or krajs) and about 3000 rayons. An intermediate council for the okrug,

through those of the rayon and the oblast, and those of the autonomous and the constituent republic, up to the supreme authority of the All-Union Congress of Soviets, with its bicameral Central Executive Committee (TSIK), its Cabinet of Ministers (Sovnarkom) and its various other derivatives.

The Rayon

Among the innumerable and apparently unlimited powers of the selo-soviet and the small city soviet, there is one universal duty which stands out, that of electing people's deputies or delegates to the congress of soviets of the rayon. The rayon, now formed mainly on lines of economic production, is a new area comprising a number of adjacent villages and what in England would be called hamlets, together with such small cities or urban settlements as happen to be intermixed with them. The geographical extent and the population of the rayon differ from place to place according to local circumstances, and may be varied from time to time by decrees of any superior authority.¹ It may thus comprise any number of villages, from a few dozen to many score, with half a dozen times as many dependent hamlets, with or without one or more cities and urban settlements. The soviet of each of these annually elects one (or if large, several) people's deputies or delegates to constitute the rayon congress of soviets, which meets at the principal centre of the rayon.

In the RSFSR and the Ukraine the village soviet elects these delegates at the rate of one for every 300 inhabitants. The soviets of the small cities and urban settlements within the rayon elect delegates at the rate of one for each unit of 60 electors of these soviets (approximately equal

standing between the rayon and the oblast, was designed; but this was abandoned in 1930. This reorganisation is now nearly completed; and for the sake of clearness we shall limit our description to the new general system, although the old continues to exist temporarily in a few places.

With the abolition of the okrug, the cities having populations of more than 50,000, and some others of great industrial importance, have been, in the six smaller constituent republics, taken out of the rayon, and made directly subordinate to the Sovnarkom (Cabinet) and TSIK (central executive committee) of the constituent republic within which they are situated. In the RSFSR, however, these major cities are subordinated also to the executive committee (ispolkom) of the oblast or krai. The other cities, having populations below 50,000, remain within the rayons, but with an autonomy greatly exceeding that enjoyed by the villages. Such cities, for instance, fix their own local taxes and settle their own budgets, which are adopted by the city soviet, and only passed through the rayon ispolkom for general concurrence, and submission to the oblast ispolkom.

For exact information as to local government constitution in the USSR, the student must go to the decrees themselves, but these are summarised in *The Soviet State*, by B. W. Maxwell, 1934, chap. vii., "Provincial Government", pp. 100-108; where the Russian sources are indicated (pp. 347-348). See also *Soviet Rule in Russia*, by W. R. Batsell, 1929, chap. xi., "Local Administration" (pp. 663-687), which does not clearly give the more recent changes.

¹ Actually the 3000 rayons appear to include, on an average, about 23 selosoviets and perhaps one small city or urban settlement apiece, with an average population of about 45,000; which is analogous to that of an English rural district council in its much smaller area.

to 120 inhabitants). Thus, as is usual in the soviet bodies, the total number of members of the rayon congress of soviets is not fixed, and with the increase of population it is always growing. It elects a president, with some other members to form a presidium, and also a standing executive committee (ispolkom) not exceeding 45 members, together with one-third as many candidates or alternates.

When we enquire what are the powers and duties entrusted to the rayon congress of soviets, we are met with the same difficulty as that with which we were confronted in the case of the village soviet. The list of these powers and duties, as expressly laid down in the RSFSR decree of January 1, 1931, is indeed substantially similar to that relating to the village soviet, which we give as an appendix to this volume. These powers and duties range from the consideration and discussion of the loftiest matters of policy and administration of the USSR as a whole, in which the rayon congress of soviets, like the village soviet, is invited and desired to participate, and which it is expressly directed to put in operation within its own area, down to the minutest details of parochial administration. It is, indeed, not to be supposed that the entire conglomeration of these subjects are even discussed by any of the 3000 rayon congresses of soviets, any more than they are by the 70,000-odd village soviets. But in startling contrast with the narrowly limited and precisely defined functions of the British or American local governing body, there is practically nothing in the world that the rayon congress of soviets, equally with the village soviet, is not authorised and indeed invited to deal with, so far as its application to the denizens of its area is concerned. On the other hand, again in contrast with the British or American local authority, the rayon congress of soviets, like the village soviet, has no legal rights on which it can insist against the will of any superior administrative authority. It may at any moment find its decisions overruled, and its actions cancelled and reversed by the oblast congress of soviets which it joins with other rayons in creating ; or by the oblast ispolkom (or executive committee) ; or by the republic congress of soviets or its Central Executive Committee ; or by the sovnarkom, or the People's Commissar, of the constituent or autonomous republic within the area of which it is situated ; or by the All-Union Congress of Soviets or its TSIK (or Central Executive Committee) ; or, indeed, by the presidium of any of these bodies ; or by the USSR Sovnarkom of People's Commissars. Thus, the rayon congress of soviets has a practically unlimited sphere of action, so far as its own area is concerned, subject always to the liability to be sharply pulled up and overruled whenever it does anything contrary to the policy or the will of any authority higher than itself. It has absolute freedom to participate in government, and it is encouraged and strongly urged to participate in any way it chooses ; but it is no less sternly warned that whenever it "goes off the rails", its action will be cancelled and reversed ; and if the local body persists, it will be summarily disbanded, and a new election will be called for. In order to enable this superior authority to be exercised,

all obligatory decrees of a lower authority—indeed the minutes of proceedings themselves—have to be forwarded immediately to the next higher authority, as well as to the appropriate People's Commissariat of the USSR and that of an autonomous republic. We gather that, in practice, the rayon congress and its executive, like the village soviet, usually errs by default rather by excess of zeal; and that drastic interference from above, though unhesitatingly undertaken when required, is, to put it mildly, not of incessant occurrence.

The relation of the rayon congress of soviets to the various village and small urban soviets within its area is mainly one of supervision and control. Thus, the rayon congress appoints for each village the president of the electoral commission of ten local members to supervise the election of the village soviet; to compile and post up publicly the list of persons excluded from the electorate; and to provide an independent chairman for the various election meetings.

On the other hand, an essential function of the 3000 rayon soviets is that of concentrating in a single body the representation of the large number of village soviets within their several areas, occasionally amounting, as it seems, to more than one hundred, in such a way as to render practicable the election of delegates to the next higher council in the hierarchy.

The organs of local administration of the rayon congress of soviets, acting under the supervision and direction of the rayon ispolkom, or executive committee that the plenum elects, and of the presidium that the ispolkom appoints, consist of a number of sections (six of them being obligatory¹) on each of which there serve some members of the rayon congress and ispolkom, together with a varying number of inhabitants whom the ispolkom invites to act as a civic obligation. We are informed that the object of forming these sections is that of associating as large a proportion as possible of the "toiling masses" in the work of government. Meetings are held in the various factories and workshops, clubs and reading-rooms, throughout the rayon, where the members of the rayon congress of soviets, the "militia" (local constabulary) and the local courts of justice attend; where active workers are enlisted for the sections, and where the "concrete problems" of the work of the rayon congress are discussed. The obligatory sections are those dealing with "soviet construction and control of execution"; "industry, labour and supplies"; agriculture; health; education, the rayon's share in the General Plan, and the rayon's financial budget.

The rayon section dealing with the General Plan, so far as it relates to the rayon area stands in an interesting relation to Gosplan, to which it is

¹ Namely, those on (1) Soviet Construction and control of execution; (2) Industry, Labour and Supply; (3) Agriculture; (4) Finance and budget; (5) Popular Education; (6) Public Health (RSFSR decree of January 1, 1931, section 38). To these there has been added, for all but the smallest rayons, a section on the General Plan, in subordination to the Union State Planning Commission, which we describe in our chapter on "Planned Production for Community Consumption".

subordinate. National planning is now based largely upon constituent rayon planning. The rayon has to prepare each year its own preliminary plan for all the enterprises within its area in accordance with the general economic considerations of which it is advised. This has to be submitted to each local enterprise, productive or cultural. Each considers the quota assigned to it, and either approves or prepares a counter-plan. The whole are then submitted to the higher authorities to be further revised and finally enacted.¹

The only other part of the administration of the rayon calling for attention is that of finance. The rayon congress has annually to settle the budget of local receipts and expenditure for the ensuing year, which has to be submitted to the oblast ispolkom for approval, and for inclusion in the oblast budget, with a view to its ultimate incorporation in the budget of the autonomous or constituent republic, and, indeed, finally in that of the USSR itself. Thus there is, in principle as well as in form, no effective local autonomy in finance in any grade of council from the smallest selo-soviet up to the All-Russian Congress of Soviets of the RSFSR. In practice, however, there is a great deal of financial autonomy. To begin with, the amount of expenditure to be undertaken by the lower authorities, whilst it can be summarily restrained by any higher authority, cannot effectively be increased otherwise than by exhortation and persuasion. On the other hand, if the lower authorities choose to incur larger expenditure at their own cost, they are usually permitted to add a surtax to one or other of the taxes levied within their area by any of the higher authorities.

Elaborate provision is made by law as to the rayon being served by half a dozen organised departments of permanent officials, who are required to possess technical qualification and training. In fact there is as yet, in the vast majority of rayons, nothing more than a skeleton staff of officials of the very minimum of training. A marked feature is the extreme youthfulness of nearly all of them, few being over thirty, or having more than a few years' office experience. We understand that measures for the special training of administrative officials are under consideration.

The Oblast

Above both the rayon congresses of soviets of the rural districts and the soviets of the small cities, and superseding the ancient gubernia or province, stands, in the RSFSR and the Ukraine, the authority of the krai or oblast. The oblast congress of soviets is formed by delegates from the rayon congresses of soviets, representing the village soviets, at the rate (in the RSFSR) of one for every 12,500 inhabitants (equal to about one for every 7000 electors); and also by delegates elected directly by

¹ From paper by V. Kuibishev, head of Gosplan, in *Planned Economy*, April 1931. We deal with the whole subject in our subsequent chapter entitled "Planned Production for Community Consumption", Part II.

the soviets of the small cities (together with those of the urban settlements, factories and collective farms outside civic boundaries) at the rate of one delegate for each 2500 electors. Any autonomous republic or autonomous area within the territory is entitled to elect its own delegates at the rate of one for each 2000 electors from urban centres and one for each 10,000 inhabitants from rural settlements. It will be seen that the city soviets enjoy the usual disproportionate representation (more than twice as great as that of the rural villages). This disproportionate representation of the population of the cities, in comparison with that of the villages, does not prevent most, if not all, oblast congresses of soviets from containing far more representatives of villages than of city dwellers, because the proportion of the latter to the whole population of the area is still only as one to five or six.

The area over which the oblast congress of soviets presides, the number of its members, and the nature and extent of its functions, appear to differ in different parts and to be still in course of settlement. The population within the different oblasts varies enormously, even as much as from one to ten millions. In the RSFSR the approximate average appears to be nearly four millions. If we take the autonomous republics in the USSR, which are classed with the oblasts properly so-called, we see that their average population is only about a million and a half, whilst their average area is no less than 650,000 square kilometres. On the other hand, the average population of the fourteen oblasts properly so-called, exceeds five millions, although their average area is roughly the same as that of the autonomous republic.¹ In the Ukraine the average population and area are both smaller. The five lesser constituent republics have no oblasts, the rayon congresses of soviets, being directly under the republican congress of soviets, its central executive committee and its sovnarkom.

In the RSFSR there are, we gather, twenty-six territories ranking as oblasts, including the areas of the twelve autonomous republics within its boundaries which have the same constitutional form as other oblasts, except that they call their ministerial heads of departments People's Commissars and their council a sovnarkom. Thus there are the fourteen newly delimited oblasts of Moscow and Leningrad, the Ivanovo industrial area, the Northern territory, the Western territory, the Central Black Earth area, the Gorki (late Nizhni-Novgorod) territory, the Ural territory, that of the North Caucasus, the two territories of the Middle and Lower Volga, and the two of East and West Siberia, together with the Far Eastern territory. With them are ranked the twelve autonomous republics, namely, those of the Crimea, the Tartars, the Volga Germans, Kazak, Yakut, Kirghiz, Chuvash, Karelia, Buryat, Bashkir, Karakalpak and Daghestan. In each of these divisions there is a Congress of Soviets

¹ Thus the autonomous republic in the RSFSR, whilst having a large area, is comparable in population to the half-dozen most populous administrative counties of England. The oblasts of the RSFSR, on the other hand, usually surpass in population the most populous of the English administrative counties and some even that of Ireland or the administrative county of London.

electing an executive (termed either *ispolkom* or *sovnarkom*) which directs a varied and extensive local administration.

In the Ukraine, some of the oblast areas are particularly large, there being only half a dozen so called for the whole republic.¹ But in the Donets industrial area the population is so dense, and the amount of work so great, that each rayon soviet is accepted as equivalent also to an oblast soviet. In the other parts of the Ukraine, the rayon congress of soviets, either each year or every two years, elects representatives to the oblast congress of soviets at the rate of one for each 15,000 of the population, amounting in each case to several hundred delegates.

Wherever it exists, the oblast congress of soviets is an important authority. It is, indeed, the supreme local organ of power within its own area, with a competence extending to all matters of government. It has, however, to coordinate its activity with the policy and administration of the central executive committee (VTSIK) and the Sovnarkom of the constituent republic, whilst the USSR sovnarkom and its presidium also have the right to suspend or reverse, in case of need, anything done by the oblast authorities. It has the right to control all public institutions within its area, not being those of the USSR; and even these it has a right to supervise and report upon. It can veto any regulation or decision of any of the city soviets or any of the rayon or selosoviets within its area. It controls all the elections within the oblast. Finally, it has the right to propose to the authorities of the constituent republic the enactment and promulgation of any laws and regulations relating to the oblast that are required.

But the oblast congress of soviets meets as a plenum, usually, only once a year, when it elects a president, and his assistant, who both give their whole time to the work, and also an *ispolkom*, or executive committee, of about one hundred members, who receive only their expenses and a free pass over all the railways within the oblast. In the case of the autonomous republics, the congress of soviets elects, in lieu of an *ispolkom*, a sovnarkom of People's Commissars who themselves control the various branches of administration. In both cases the USSR Government is directly represented in the oblast executive by officials of such USSR People's Commissariats as Railroads and Posts and Telegraphs. The *ispolkom* of an ordinary oblast is supposed to conduct its administration through its presidium and four organised departments of officials (a secretariat, an organisation department, a planning commission termed *obplan*, and a "commission of execution"). But the work which has to be performed falls under fifteen or more heads, of which we may mention a "regional council of people's economy"; agriculture; trade or distribution of commodities; finance; communal department; education; health; social welfare; military; political; and archives; together

¹ Namely, those of Chernigov, Kiev, Odessa, Dniepropetrovsk, Kharkov and Vinitza, with which must be ranked the Moldavian Autonomous Republic, and, as explained in the text, all the separate rayons of the Donets Basin.

with the department of justice. In many oblasts the lack of an adequate official staff has led to the appointment of a number of sections each containing a selection from the members of the oblast congress of soviets and the ispolkom, together with other active or representative citizens appointed by the ispolkom. Each of these sections is charged with the supervision and actual administration of one department of the work of the oblast. It should be said that, in the matter of local taxation and the budget of the oblast the oblast ispolkom has the right to participate in the discussion both of the budget of the constituent republic and of that of the USSR itself, in so far as these relate to its own area.

The Seven Federated Republics

The next tier of councils, above that of the oblast or krai, where they exist, and of the autonomous republics, is that of the seven Union or constituent republics of the RSFSR, the Ukraine, White Russia, the Transcaucasian Federation (itself a federation of three distinct republics), Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tadzhikistan, all of which are directly joined together in federation as the USSR.

The RSFSR

The first and by far the most important of these republics, the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic, although expressly termed a federation, is and has always been essentially a unitary state. Notwithstanding its title, and an express declaration in the first article of its Fundamental Law in 1918, what was established by that law, without subsequent revision, was a soviet hierarchy, or pyramid, of the pattern that we have so often described. The RSFSR was to have a supreme All-Russian Congress of Soviets, made up of deputies or delegates elected by provincial congresses of soviets under various designations; and these provincial congresses were made up of deputies or delegates from smaller district congresses of soviets, themselves consisting of deputies or delegates from village or urban soviets, who were directly elected at innumerable small gatherings of electors, associated either in work at particular establishments or as neighbours in rural villages. From top to bottom of this pyramid of councils, each tier has complete authority over all below it, and is itself completely subject to all above it. This system of "Democratic Centralism", as it is fondly called, which is universally characteristic of Soviet Communism, seems to us to have nothing in common with the curtailed but inviolable autonomy of the various units that is understood by federalism.¹

¹ In the discussion leading up to the formulation and adoption of the "Fundamental Law" during the first half of 1918, the slogan of "All Power to the Soviets" was so strongly insisted on, that the very first article had to assert that "Russia is declared a republic of soviets of workers', soldiers' and peasants' deputies. *All central and local*

It is, indeed, remarkable how small and relatively unimportant have been the changes since 1918 in the constitutional structure of the RSFSR, notwithstanding the development of autonomous republics and autonomous areas within it, and the formation of the USSR about and above it.¹ Its capital is still Moscow, where the RSFSR ministerial departments are cheek-by-jowl with those of the USSR. The "All-Russian Congress of Soviets" now meets only every few years, usually just prior to the All-Union Congress, to which the same delegates immediately proceed. It is composed of delegates elected by the congresses of soviets of the several oblasts or krais, autonomous republics and autonomous areas, and the larger cities, in the proportion of one to every 125,000 population of rural areas, and one to every 25,000 city electors (equal to about 45,000 population). The Central Executive Committee (VTSIK) of the RSFSR, now increased in size from 200 to 400, meets only once a quarter. The Sovnarkom no longer includes as many as eighteen People's Commissars, seeing that all the "questions of national importance" specified in articles 49 and 50 of the Fundamental Law, with the departments of foreign affairs, armed forces, foreign trade, heavy industry, forestry, state farms, railways and waterways, posts and telegraphs, and food industry, have passed to the USSR; and these departments are now represented in the RSFSR Sovnarkom only by the delegates or agents of the USSR People's Commissars. There are, however, in the RSFSR Sovnarkom, still eight People's Commissars, under a president, with two vice-presidents, namely, those for Finance, Interior, Justice, Education, Health, Social Welfare, Agriculture, and Light Industries, together with the president of the RSFSR Gosplan.²

When it is remembered that the population of the RSFSR exceeds one hundred millions, and that the territory stretches from the Gulf of Finland to the Pacific Ocean, it will be seen that even these nine government departments represent an immense task of administration. The *authority is vested in these soviets.*" The state that was established as the Russian Soviet Republic, and then styled the RSFSR, was conceived, by at least some of its most energetic advocates, as nothing more than a federation of all the urban and rural soviets throughout the country.

In article 10 it is again expressly declared that "all authority within the boundaries of the RSFSR is vested in the entire working population of the country, *organised in the urban and rural soviets*" (Fundamental Law of the RSFSR, ratified by the Fifth All-Russian Congress of Soviets on July 10, 1918, First section, chap. i., article 10; *Soviet Rule in Russia*, by W. R. Batsell, 1929, p. 81). But the Fundamental Law, taken as a whole, established, as we now see, a state of the very opposite character.

¹ Incidentally we may note that the territory of White Russia, and thus of the USSR, was reduced, under the Treaty of Riga (1921) ending the war with Poland, by a strip along the western frontier, which was ceded to Poland. In 1929 the extensive but scantily peopled district of Tadzhikistan was taken out of the RSFSR, and promoted to the status of an independent constituent republic of the Soviet Union, entitled, like the RSFSR itself, to representation by five members in the Soviet of Nationalities, forming part of the bicameral Central Executive Committee of the USSR.

² Agriculture now has a USSR People's Commissar, who has, in the RSFSR, as in other federated republics, considerably reduced the autonomy of local People's Commissars. The departments of the Commissariat for Labour have been transferred to the AUCCTU, and there is accordingly now no People's Commissar of Labour.

civil service of the RSFSR may exceed in number the federal staff of the USSR itself, apart from the defence forces and the establishments in foreign countries. With the more significant features of this vast administration we shall deal in subsequent chapters. The RSFSR Sovnarkom is still busy in developing schools and medical services over the vast area that it controls. It has to carry on the great retailing business in Moscow, Leningrad and Rostov that we shall describe in a later chapter. Its responsibility—save for the occasional spasmodic intervention that we shall presently describe of the USSR Supreme Court—for the administration of justice, the prevention of crime and the maintenance of prisons within the whole area of the RSFSR may be circumscribed by the creation of the new USSR People's Commissar for Internal Affairs. The observer cannot resist the feeling that, whilst the local government of the cities, and that of the krais and oblasts, rayons and selosoviets, within the RSFSR, is growing in magnitude and activity, the various central organs of the RSFSR at Moscow have lost ground to the other central organs located in the same city, belonging to the federal government of the USSR that we have still to describe.

The Republic of the Ukraine

The second in importance among the seven constituent republics now forming the USSR and the only one of a magnitude and a population, a productivity and an aspiration at all comparable with the RSFSR, is that of the Ukraine. Here we have a population of thirty millions (nearly one-third of that of the RSFSR), concentrated, to the extent of 150 to the square kilometre, on an area comparable with that of Sweden, having its own language appreciably differing from Russian; its own ancient cultural centre at Kiev; and its own traditions of former national autonomy under an elected hetman. Although these traditions had been interrupted by centuries of tsarist tyranny, it needed little incitement from the German military authorities in 1916–1917 to induce a large proportion of the Ukrainians to struggle, not merely for the destruction of Russian dominion, but also, with some expectation of sympathy from Ukrainian (otherwise called Ruthenian) minorities in Austria, Poland and Roumania, for an independent Ukrainian Republic. This was proclaimed on December 27, 1917. There was, however, never any chance for a political union of the whole Ukrainian race, one-fifth of which, outside the USSR, remains to this day firmly held within the four neighbouring states, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Roumania. Accordingly, when between 1917 and 1922 the foreign armies and the widespread banditry were got rid of, there was established, within the Ukrainian part of Tsarist Russia, a reasonably well-organised government on the common pattern of the hierarchy of soviets, in a friendly "military and economic alliance" with the RSFSR, which was formally proclaimed in December 1920, and converted into a federal union in 1922–1923.¹

¹ See *National States and National Minorities*, by W. C. Macartney, 1934.

The supreme authority in the Ukraine is the All-Ukrainian Congress of Soviets, which now meets for about a week, usually once every few years, just before the All-Union Congress of Soviets at Moscow. It consists of about a thousand delegates and "candidates" (being substitutes or alternates) chosen by the plenums of the six oblast congresses of soviets, together with that of the Autonomous Republic of Moldavia and the congresses of soviets of each of the Donets rayons. This All-Ukrainian Congress of Soviets hears speeches, approves drafts of decrees and administrative resolutions laid before it, and appoints a president of the Ukraine Congress, with an Assistant, together with a Central Executive Committee, and a sovnarkom of People's Commissars.

The Central Executive Committee of about 400 members, who all receive a free pass over the railways in the Ukraine, meets usually once a quarter for about ten days, and exercises supreme authority between the infrequent sessions of the All-Ukrainian Congress. A meeting is usually held immediately before each meeting of the Central Executive Committee (TSIK) of the USSR at Moscow, in order to consider the business coming before that meeting, and if necessary to concert a Ukrainian policy.

The Ukrainian Sovnarkom consists of a president, several vice-presidents and a secretary, with People's Commissars for Finance, Internal Affairs, Agriculture, Justice, Light Industries, Education, Health and Social Welfare, and a local Planning Commission practically subordinate to Gosplan.

The Ukrainian People's Commissars dealing directly with industry have exceptionally heavy departments to administer. The industrial developments in the Ukraine during the past few years have been enormous in amount and range; and whilst most of the work has fallen first to the USSR Supreme Economic Council, and on its abolition to the People's Commissars for Heavy and Food Industries respectively, the Ukrainian Government has retained and developed some of its own undertakings. It has its own steelworks and machine-making factories, conducted in dutiful compliance with the General Plan, but as enterprises of the republic.¹ The Ukrainian Sovnarkom also conducts, in supplement of the efforts of Centrosoyus and the increasing work of the Ukrainian Cooperative Societies, a very extensive business in retailing household commodities of all kinds, in the relatively well-appointed government shops at Kharkov, Kiev, Odessa, Dneprostoi and other cities.

Beneath the All-Ukrainian Congress of Soviets, with its Central Executive Committee and Sovnarkom of People's Commissars, there stands the usual hierarchy of soviets of the oblasts, rayons, cities and villages according to the common pattern which we have just described. Some peculiarities of the Ukraine may, however, be mentioned. Its

¹ When, in 1932, the Supreme Economic Council of the USSR was, as we shall presently describe, replaced by new People's Commissars for Heavy, Food and Timber Industries respectively, careful provision had to be made to preserve to the Ukrainian Sovnarkom its control over the enterprises that were Ukrainian.

villages are usually exceptionally large and populous, many having between five and ten thousand inhabitants, so that the electors have exceptionally often to be divided into settlements or wards, for each of which a separate meeting (election point or curia) has to be held to elect members to the village soviet (selosoviet). Similarly, as we have already mentioned, the rayons in the densely populated industrial area of the Donets Basin have so great a number of electors, and local government functions of such importance, that they rank and are treated also as oblasts, and directly elect their own delegates to the All-Ukrainian Congress of Soviets.

The Ukraine retains among its intelligentsia a strong national feeling, and energetically develops its own Ukrainian culture, which is very nationalist in form, although communist in essence, in books and newspapers, theatres and universities. The USSR authorities wisely respect the racial susceptibilities of this important republic. It is as a concession to these susceptibilities that it was in 1934 decided to retransfer the capital which has for the past decade been at Kharkov, to the ancient metropolis of Kiev. But whatever may happen in learning and literature the industrial development is so predominantly "All-Union" in its influence, and the Communist Party in the Ukraine is so definitely directed from Moscow, that, in spite of repeated attempts of the *émigrés* centred in Paris and Prague to incite to rebellion, it is impossible to ignore a tendency to a more complete unification.¹

The White Russian and Transcaucasian Republics

We need not go into detail about the White Russian Soviet Socialist Republic (capital Minsk) on the western border of the USSR, adjoining Latvia, Lithuania and Poland;² or about the combined Union republic of the Transcaucasian Socialist Soviet Federation, which has its capital at Tiflis, for its three constituent republics wedged between the Black and Caspian Seas, and adjoining Turkey on the southern border.³ Both have

¹ The Moldavian Socialist Soviet Republic, on the left bank of the Dniester river, which forms the frontier of Bessarabia, was made an autonomous republic under Ukraine on October 12, 1924. This exclusively agricultural community (capital Balta) with a population of 600,000 upon an area of only 8288 square kilometres—about as large as the North Riding of Yorkshire or the canton of Berne—may perhaps be regarded as a lasting embodiment of the protest of the USSR against the Roumanian seizure of Bessarabia, which it is hoped, may one day be enabled, as South Moldavia, to unite with the northern half of what is claimed to be a single community. With this view, the Moldavian Republic maintains a sovnrakom of People's Commissars, but is for many purposes dealt with as if it were merely an oblast of the Ukraine.

² The White Russian Socialist Soviet Republic has an area of 126,790 square kilometres—three times that of Switzerland—with a population slightly exceeding five millions, four-fifths of whom speak the White Russian dialect, whilst Jews attain the relatively high proportion of 10 per cent. The constitution is almost identical in form to that of the RSFSR, with which it finds its activities coordinated.

³ The three constituents of this federation are Azerbaijan (capital Baku), which established its soviet republic in April 1920; Armenia (capital Erivan), which did so in December 1920; and Georgia (capital Tiflis), in which a soviet government was established by the Bolshevik army in February 1921. On March 19, 1922, these three governments,

governments organised upon the common pattern, with central executive committees several hundreds strong and sovnarkoms administering the local affairs. Both retain strong feelings in favour of local autonomy based on racial and linguistic, as well as (especially in the case of Georgia) historical associations, and are accordingly left in undisturbed enjoyment of the cultural autonomy that they value. Both find their industries developed, continuously and extensively, at the expense of the whole Soviet Union, and their agriculture directed according to the USSR General Plan ; whilst in both the strictly unitary Communist Party everywhere exerts a potent influence in promoting a common economic policy and in gradually developing a new common sentiment as constituent parts of the larger whole.

The Formation of the Soviet Union

With the final defeat of the "White" armies, and the withdrawal of the last of the contingents of the foreign powers, the time came for the establishment of a common rule for the whole territory of what was left of Tsarist Russia.¹ The capitalist governments did not relinquish their hostility with the withdrawal of their forces, and the necessity for union for common defence had been made sufficiently obvious. Its importance for economic and social planning could not be missed. The influence of the widely dispersed membership of the essentially unitary Communist Party worked powerfully in the same direction. Already by December 28, 1920, Lenin and Chicherin, for the RSFSR, had agreed with Rakovski, president of the Ukrainian Sovnarkom, and also its People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, on a Treaty of Alliance which embodied the main outlines of the eventual Treaty of Union. The World International Conference, to which the Moscow Government had gladly accepted an invitation, was about to meet at Genoa, and agreements were hastily concluded by the RSFSR with White Russia and the Transcaucasian Federation, as well as with the Ukraine, providing that they should accept, as their representatives at the World Conference, the delegation of the RSFSR, and support the proposals in the common interest that would be

strongly influenced by the Communist Party, agreed to unite in a Transcaucasian Federation, with a common president, congress of soviets, a central executive committee of no fewer than 485 members and Sovnarkom of People's Commissars. Each of the constituent republics has also its own government for local affairs, and maintains its own cultural autonomy, especially the use of its own language in its own schools, law courts and public offices. The population of the federation now exceeds six millions in a largely mountainous area four times as great as Scotland. For the three other "Union Republics", namely Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tadzhikistan, see p. 63.

¹ The so-called Border States (whether Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania ; or Finland and Poland), by 1918 established as independent states, were never included in the RSFSR ; whilst Bessarabia was seized by Roumania, and a further strip on the west was ceded to Poland on the conclusion of the war in 1921 (Treaty of Riga, 1921). The Ukraine, White Russia, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia were, between 1918 and 1921, at various times enjoying a nominal independence under a shifting domination by foreign armies or local banditry.

out forward. The proceedings at Genoa proved to be of little interest or importance for the Soviet Government; but Chicherin was able to conclude with Germany, to the consternation of the other diplomats, the important separate Treaty of Rapallo, in which were included, for the first time, all four soviet states. This was followed, after months of negotiation, by the agreement of these four governments, in December 1922, to constitute the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Stalin was in a position to report to the Tenth All-Russian Congress of Soviets, which opened at Moscow on December 23, 1922, that resolutions had been received from the supreme congresses of soviets of the Ukraine, of White Russia and of the Transcaucasian Federation, urging the necessity and advantage of creating a single federal union. A special delegation representing all four republics was appointed to draw up the necessary treaty, upon much the same basis as had been agreed with the Ukraine in 1920. The draft had already been prepared. Within three days the "Declaration of Union" was formulated; adopted by the "First Congress of Soviets of the USSR", and duly proclaimed by the Executive Committee which that Congress had appointed. All that was needed was a formal constitution. The new Central Executive Committee of the Union (TSIK), which was, in fact, dominated by the members who belonged to the Central Executive Committee of the RSFSR, prepared a draft which did little more than reproduce, for the Union, the scheme of government of the RSFSR itself. At this point the Communist Party publicly intervened with a more statesmanlike proposal. The Twelfth Congress of the Party was in session (April 1923); and its Central Committee formally recommended to the presidium of the All-Union Central Executive Committee (TSIK) that the draft required amendment. The proposed constitution did not, the Communist Party protested, afford by its terms sufficient assurance to the three smaller republics that the autonomy to be allowed to them would be protected against the dominance of the RSFSR. Moreover, so Stalin urged, it did not provide for putting on a genuinely federal basis the autonomous republics and autonomous oblasts that he had been establishing, inside the RSFSR, for the principal nationalities. The "counter-plan" of the Communist Party embodied a new ideal, that of the "Unnational State", in sharp contrast with the consciously "National" states into which Europe had become divided in the course of the past four centuries, this stream of tendencies coming more recently to a climax in the Italy of Mussolini and the Germany of Hitler. The project of the Communist Party, which resulted in the present federal constitution of the USSR, seems to us so novel, and fraught with consequences so important, that we give in full its fundamental propositions. It was essential, the Party declared:

"(a) To secure, during the establishment of the central organs of the Union, the equality of rights and duties of the individual republics in their mutual relationship with each other, as well as in regard to the central authority of the Union.

"(b) To establish, in the system of supreme organs of the Union, a representation of all national republics and regions on principles of equality, with possible representation of all nationalities living in these republics.

"(c) To construct the executive organs of the Union on principles which would secure a real participation therein of the representatives of these republics, and a real satisfaction of all needs of the peoples in the Union.

"(d) To allow for the republics sufficiently liberal financial and, in particular, budgetary rights, which would enable them to show their own state-administrative, cultural, and economic initiative.

"(e) To man the organs of the national republics and regions chiefly from amongst the local population, who would know local customs, language, etc.

"(f) To issue special laws which would secure for them the right to use their native language in all state organs and institutions serving the local national minorities—the laws which would prosecute and punish with full revolutionary severity all violators of national rights, and in particular of rights of national minorities.

"(g) To promote educational work in the Red Army in the sense of cultivating therein the ideas of brotherhood and solidarity of the peoples composing the Union and to take practical measures concerning the organisation of national armies, at the same time taking care that the defensive structure of the republic shall always be kept adequate."¹

A special committee, in which the RSFSR had only 14 members out of 25, thereupon drew up a new constitution, in which Stalin's plan of a "Soviet of Nationalities", with no greater representation (5) of the RSFSR than of any other constituent or autonomous republic, but with the addition of single representatives also from all the other autonomous areas within the constituent republics, was adopted as part of a bicameral Central Executive Committee. At the same time the autonomy of each constituent republic was safeguarded by suitable phrases introduced at appropriate places. The new draft was approved by the Central Committee of the Communist Party, and after formal agreement in the three other capitals, it was adopted at Moscow by the Central Executive Com-

¹ *Soviet Rule in Russia*, by W. R. Batsell, pp. 281-282; *Fifteen Years of Soviet Construction, 1917-1932* (in Russian), 1932, p. 63. The novelty and the importance of the new conception, to which we recur at the end of this chapter, are handsomely recognised in the remarkable work, *National States and National Minorities*, by W. C. Macartney, 1934.

In the concluding section of this chapter we describe in some detail the steps taken in the USSR to establish, under the "Unnational State", complete political, economic and social equality among a population of 170 million persons, comprising nearly 200 different races at markedly different stages of development—Slavs and Teutons in sundry varieties of Christendom and paganism; Scandinavians of sorts, with Finns and Esquimaux; Mongols of every grade of civilisation; Jews and Syrians and gypsies; Turks and Armenians; with Siberian and central Asiatic tribes of the most varied character, from Buddhists and Bahaists and the "Shiahs" and "Sunnis" of Islam to magic-mongers and animists.

littee of the USSR (TSIK) on July 6, 1923, when it came immediately into force; to be finally ratified by the Second All-Union Congress of Soviets on January 31, 1924.

The Federal Union

We are thus brought, at long last, to the central federal organs of the gigantic Soviet State. But we cannot refrain from the observation that this seven-starred constellation, brilliant and powerful though it be—now shining, indeed, almost the whole soviet sky—is not and has never been a federation of participants of anything like equal status. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was a leonine partnership. What happened in 1922 was that the RSFSR, with an elaborate parade of federal forms, and a genuine concession of cultural autonomy, virtually annexed to itself the three other fragments of Tsarist Russia which had been, by the Bolshevik forces with the active cooperation of a large proportion, if not a majority, of the inhabitants, cleared of hostile armies and insurgent banditry, and thus in effect conquered. To these have since been added three communities on the south-eastern Asiatic border, of vast area but small population, which have been set up as additional constituent or Union republics.¹ It must always be remembered that the prime mover in these transactions, the RSFSR itself, holds sway over a territory extending from the Baltic to the Pacific, in area twelve times as large as all the other six constituent or Union republics put together, and twenty-three times as large as the next biggest among them. It has a population twice as great as the aggregate of all the other six, and three times the total of the next greatest among them. It had at that date an army (and an armed police force) which had lately suppressed every attempt in any of the territories to set up or maintain any government hostile to that of Moscow. Above all, it possessed, in the Communist Party, a ruling order or companionship, at that time mainly concentrated in the RSFSR, which dominated the whole. When we consider how preponderant were those influences, the successive treaties of union themselves, and all the façade of federation that was set up, might easily be imagined to be unimportant, if not illusory. How far such a judgment would be accurate we shall now be able to examine.

¹ These are the Uzbek SSR (formerly Bokhara, capital Samarkand), the Turkoman SSR (capital Ashkhabad) and, promoted to independence from having been merely part of the RSFSR, the Tadzhik SSR (capital Stalinbad), all bordering on Persia and Afghanistan. The first two were formally admitted by the USSR Congress of Soviets in May 1925, and the third in October 1929. In area the three republics are nearly a million square kilometres, more than that of Germany, Austria, Holland, Belgium and Denmark combined. Their inhabitants, now numbering over seven millions, are almost all Mohammedans, but unlike the Persians, Sunnis, not Shias. Notwithstanding this religious difference, it was apparently feared that they might be drawn into union with Persia or Afghanistan; and special efforts have been made to strengthen their loyalty to the USSR, with which they are now all connected by railway and river, air lines and telegraphs as well as by new motor roads, whilst agriculture, industry and commerce have been greatly developed. (See the able survey in *The National Policy of the Soviet Union* by A. Rysakoff.)

The All-Union Congress of the USSR

The supreme body in the soviet hierarchy is the All-Union Congress of Soviets, which is made up of delegates from every part of the USSR. These are specially elected just before each such congress, which is now convened only every three or four years. These delegates have hitherto been chosen, not merely by the highest congress of soviets of each of the seven constituent republics of the Union, but also, at the rate of one delegate for every 125,000 of population, by the congresses of soviets of the autonomous republics and autonomous areas within any of these seven constituent republics ; and also by the soviets of the more populous cities and urban settlements at the rate of one delegate for each 25,000 electors, equivalent to about one for each 50,000 of population. The number of delegates varies, being roughly proportionate to the several census populations. At the congress in March 1931 the total (including 833 "candidates", being substitutes or alternates) was 2403, about three-fourths being members of the Communist Party, or candidates for membership. At the next congress, in 1935, there were 2200 delegates with deciding votes, the total including candidates or alternates reaching some 3000. Of the delegates 74 per cent were Party members or candidates, or Comsomols. About one-sixth were women. More than half of the whole were attending for the first time. This huge assembly, made up of delegates of scores of races speaking different tongues, who meet only for a week or so and then "surrender their mandates", and do not even know in advance each other's names, cannot, of course, develop the corporate life of a Parliament, or deal adequately with the details of legislation or administration. The Congress has been described, in fact, as little better than a picturesque "biennial picnic" in Moscow for locally elected visitors from all parts of the USSR, whose whole expenses are provided from USSR funds.¹ Even if this were true, it would not imply that the Congress is of no political importance. On the contrary, its periodical meeting is one of the most useful parts of the USSR constitution. Although so large and heterogeneous a gathering is of no effect as a legislature, and not even very well fitted to be a forum of debate, its very existence is a potent factor of unity. It would be difficult to overestimate the value in this respect of bringing together some three thousand local personalities from a thousand cities and villages all over the USSR, to be entertained for a week or so in Moscow, which many of them have never before visited, and to be made to feel that it is upon them that the whole government

¹ "During the congress of the soviets, which assembles from time to time in Moscow, I have watched the delegates from these far-flung territories assemble in the 'Big Theatre' which serves as meeting-place for the Congress until such time as the Palace of the Soviets is completed. Mongolians, Tadzhiks, Bashkirs, Uzbeks, Yakuts and some scores of other nationalities, representing peoples of almost every creed, stand together in respectful silence as the 'International' is played. Later in the proceedings they pass a unanimous vote of confidence in their Central Executive Committee" (*Moscow, 1911-1933*, by Allan Monkhouse, 1934, p. 135).

ends. The delegates listen to the lengthy reports laid before them, and to the not less lengthy orations of the leading statesmen. In the end the delegates unanimously give a general sanction to the outlines of policy and legislation expounded to them. But they do much more than this. Probably no foreign observer sits through all the prolonged and sometimes heated discussions that, continued day after day, make the "picnic" a very strenuous exercise. Fortunately a shorthand report of the speeches is published. At the Fifth All-Union Congress in 1929, there spoke, on the general report presented by the Government, no fewer than 10 delegates; on the combined reports of the People's Commissar of Agriculture, the Grain Trust (Zernotrest) and the cattle-breeding state farms (sovkhosi), 40 delegates; and on the report upon the organisation of collective farms (kolkhosi), 41 delegates. At the Sixth All-Union Congress in 1931, there took part in the discussions on the Government's general report, 57 delegates; on the report dealing with the position and prospective development of industry, 31 delegates; and on that about the main tasks of agriculture in connection with the whole "people's economy", 40 delegates. The mere fact that no delegate is "denied the floor", even if there is no effective voting, makes so representative a gathering of real political importance.

The Soviet "Reform Bill"

The sensation of the Seventh All-Union Congress in 1935 was the proposal by V. M. Molotov, the president of the USSR Sovnarkom, speaking on behalf of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, for a complete change in the system of election. At a time, it was said, when in the capitalist countries parliamentary democracy was becoming more and more discredited, soviet democracy was evolving to the fullest electoral development. The Congress was invited to substitute "equal elections for not entirely equal, direct election for indirect, and secret for open elections". It was explained that, as the kulaks were now crushed and the kolkhosi had achieved victory, the basis of representation in village and city (hitherto differing as between one delegate per 125,000 *inhabitants* and one per 25,000 *electors*) might safely be equalised. "All soviet organs from city and village soviets to the Central Executive Committee of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics" are to be chosen by direct election. The right of the voters to recall their deputy from any organ is to be preserved. There is to be participation of non-Party organisations and groups of toilers in the nomination of candidates. All elections are to be by secret balloting. With these far-reaching reforms the evolution of soviet democracy would be completed. This important "Reform Bill" was enthusiastically adopted by the Congress, the whole of the delegates standing to give Molotov an ovation with no dissentient voice. Molotov's opening speech was broadcast from more than 60 radio stations to all parts of the USSR to be picked up by a couple of million wireless sets in

homes, and many thousands of loud-speakers in factories and offices, as well as on the streets and squares of every city. It must have been heard by literally millions of citizens.¹

By the Congress the proposal was immediately referred with unanimity to the Central Executive Committee (TSIK) with instructions to have the scheme of reform worked out by a Constitutional Commission, for approval at a subsequent session of the Central Executive Committee, and for use at the next regular election of "the organs of soviet power". The very next day this Constitutional Commission was appointed, consisting of 31 members, under Stalin as chairman, and including all the seven presidents of the Union republics, Kaganovich, Molotov and Litvinov, Radek and Bukharin, and a number of other leading personalities of the Party, representing all shades of opinion. At its first meeting, on July 7, the Commission appointed eleven sub-committees to deal with as many separate departments of its work, together with a twelfth, the editorial sub-committee, consisting of the chairmen of all the others, under Stalin himself.

We understand that the new electoral system is now (1935) being actively worked out by the sub-committees of the Constitutional Commission: but nothing is yet known of the means by which the difficulties will be overcome. The methods of election of the village and city soviets, and of the rayon, oblast and republic congresses of soviets, have to be considered, equally with those of the All-Union Congress of Soviets; but there seems no actual need for complete identity of device in all these cases. Will the characteristic use of small meetings of the electors be given up? If anything like a couple of thousand delegates are to be directly elected to the All-Union Congress by single-member constituencies, approximately equal in populations, with electorates of between 40,000 and 50,000, the constituencies in the rural districts must be of great superficial area, entailing some difficulty in voting and in collecting the votes for counting. But in Queensland and Western Australia similar difficulties have been successfully overcome. In the USSR the date of the election might have to be changed from winter to summer. More difficult may be the adoption of secret voting. It is hard to imagine what system can be successfully adopted for an electorate soon to reach one hundred millions in number, dispersed over so huge an area. If individual ballot papers are used, the amount of paper required will be considerable; and if, as is the case at present, all the elections are contested, the task of counting the votes will tax the arithmetical powers of the local officials. The political world will watch with interest so colossal an experiment in taking the vote. We do not ourselves believe that the outcome of the election in the USSR under direct, equal and secret voting will be sub-

¹ Telegrams reported "good reception" and attentive listening crowds at all parts. Those "workers of Moscow factories and mills . . . of the morning shifts, who have no radio sets in their homes, remained at the plants till evening in order to hear the reports from the large Kremlin Palace" (*Moscow Daily News*, January 30, 1935).

tantially different from that under the present system of indirect election. The principal result may be a new demonstration of the very widespread acquiescence of the population in the existing régime, whose recent economic and political achievements have become highly appreciated. Equally striking will be the demonstration that the existing Soviet Government does not fear the peasants' votes, and has no need of the dictatorial powers conferred by law upon Mussolini and Hitler.

The Organs of the Congress

Of the routine decisions of the Congress, the principal is the election of the Central Executive Committee (TSIK), to which is entrusted all legislative and executive power until the meeting of the next All-Union Congress. This executive is a curiously constructed bicameral body, which we shall presently describe in detail, consisting of the "Union of Soviets" of 607 members in 1935 (437 in 1931) elected by the Congress in proportion to the census population of the areas represented, at the rate of something like one to each 300,000 inhabitants; and of the "Soviet of Nationalities" of 150 members, being five representing the highest congress of soviets of each constituent republic or autonomous republic within a constituent republic, and one by the like body of each other autonomous area.¹

With regard to the distribution of powers between the federal government and the governments of the constituent parts, there may seem, at first sight, practically nothing that is unusual in federal states.² To the federal authority fall (1) all foreign relations (representation, treaties, declarations of war and peace, alteration of the external frontiers); (2) all the armed forces; (3) transport, posts and telegraphs and radio; (4) currency and credit systems, also weights and measures and statistics; (5) the issuing and management of all state loans, internal or external; (6) conditions of citizenship; (7) the right of general amnesty; and (8) more ambiguously, what is called the establishment of the bases and fundamental principles in respect of civil and criminal codes, courts of justice, education, public health and labour protection, and of the development and use of land, waters, mineral deposits and forests. What is unmistakably novel is (9) the concession to the federal government of everything relating to imports and exports to or from the Soviet Union,

¹ In practice, we are told, the actual choice of these representatives of the several autonomous parts of the federation—at any rate for the "Union of Soviets"—is sometimes made by the group of delegates from each part who find themselves together at Moscow attending the Congress. Each delegation nominates to the Congress the particular members of its delegation whom it wishes to see elected to the "Union of Soviets" (about a quarter or one-third of its own delegation to the Congress). The Congress elects without question the nominees put forward in the name of each republic.

² Batsell could even state that "The specific categories of power . . . declared to fall within the exclusive purview of the Union . . . conform very closely to section 8 of article 1 of the constitution of the United States" (*Soviet Rule in Russia*, by W. R. Batsell, 1929, p. 234).

under which all foreign trade has become a centralised state monopoly ; and (10) "the establishment of the foundations and the general plan of the whole people's economy of the Union", meaning the collective organisation of the whole production and distribution of commodities. These last two categories of federal government are, however, not gained at the expense of the constituent authorities, which never wielded these powers. They represent the deprivation of the individual landlord or capitalist of his private power over the means of production, distribution and exchange. Their assumption by the federal government, together with the enormous development of industrialisation during the past decade, have increased beyond all expectation the dominance of the USSR administration over that of even the largest of the associated republics.

The Central Executive Committee (TSIK)

The great powers of the federal government, whether legislative or executive, are shared between the bicameral Central Executive Committee (TSIK), with various commissions that it appoints, on the one hand, and on the other, the Sovnarkom, or Council of People's Commissars, which it also appoints, but which occupies a position of exceptional administrative authority requiring a separate description.

The Central Executive Committee, usually referred to as TSIK, and consisting of the Union of Soviets and the Soviet of Nationalities in two separate chambers, is a standing body, existing from congress to congress, and meeting three or four times annually,¹ principally to discuss and ratify the decrees and decisions formulated, either by its own presidium or arrived at by the USSR Council of People's Commissars (Sovnarkom), which corresponds approximately to the Cabinet of Ministers of western democracies. Its agenda, which the committee itself can alter, is drawn up by its presidium.

One of the functions of the Central Executive Committee and the one to which it owes its bicameral form, seems to have lost some of its significance. The Soviet of Nationalities is unique among political bodies in its remarkable basis of numerically equal representation (5 each), not only of the 9 constituent republics (the Transcaucasian Federation counting as 3), which vary in population from one to one hundred millions, but also of the numerous "autonomous republics" which are actually

¹ It was stated that, of the TSIK members in 1933, 18.4 per cent were actually manual working wage-earners in industrial enterprises. It is habitually found that all but 1 or 2 per cent are members of the Communist Party. All members of the TSIK wear a silver badge, and enjoy the privilege of a free railway pass over the whole country. They receive, in addition, the whole of their expenses in attending the meetings at Moscow.

A member of TSIK cannot be arrested or prosecuted without the permission of the presidium of TSIK. They are empowered to attend any meetings of any public body in the USSR, and visit any institution. But they are forbidden to address any meeting on behalf of TSIK, or speak in its name, without its special permission.

situated within divers of these constituent republics ; to these the other "autonomous areas" (oblasts or krais), also within the territories of the constituent republics, each add one representative. The two chambers of this bicameral body have equal rights as regards legislation. Each chamber must separately assent to every new law. In case of disagreement the issue is referred to a Conciliation Committee formed of an equal number of each chamber, with a president taken from among the members of TSIK, who may be in either chamber. The committee's decision is formally submitted to both chambers, and if either refuses to accept it, the measure is held to be rejected. However, either chamber may then appeal to the All-Union Congress, whose decision is final.

Thus, there is reason for the two chambers to meet separately and, when they have a joint session, even to vote separately. They must hold a joint meeting for the election of the presidium of TSIK, which is about the most influential organ of the constitution.

But we believe that the twofold nature of TSIK has, so far, never been called upon to resist either the increasing tendency to centralisation of authority, or the unmistakable predominance of the area (the RSFSR) within which both Moscow and Leningrad are situated. It was devised, it is said, by Stalin himself, as part of the inducement by which the Ukraine, Transcaucasia and White Russia were brought into federal union. With the liberal recognition of "cultural autonomy" and, very largely, of the principle of confiding the government of each locality to officials belonging to its own race, no serious cleavage along racial or geographical lines seems to have developed. Whilst differences of opinion naturally arise among members, and sectional grievances find spokesmen in both chambers of TSIK, it is understood that the Soviet of Nationalities, as such, has never voted differently from the Union of Soviets as such, so that the joint meetings of the two chambers, with which each session of TSIK terminates, and which are marked by unanimous votes in both parts of the joint body, have become purely ceremonial.

It would, however, be a mistake to regard the Central Executive Committee as merely a ratifying body. It evidently plays an important part in the discussion of general policy, alike by way of criticism of executive action and in the formulation and adoption of new measures to cope with changing circumstances. Its members from all over the USSR bring information, both of local needs and of local opinion, to bear upon the minds of potentates necessarily resident in Moscow itself. If current gossip is to be trusted, it is the discussions in TSIK that have more than once determined a change in policy. Moreover TSIK takes an important part in administration, by the various commissions which it appoints, and which report directly to itself. Thus it has a Budget Commission, which reports on the finances of the whole USSR, and a Central Election Commission, which sees to the regularity of all the multifarious elections throughout the Union. It has a standing commission on the care of the

central archives, and another on general questions of administrative organisation. There is a committee on scientific research and progress; a central technical education commission, and also a committee on the higher colleges, all of them dealing with the organisation and geographical distribution of university and other institutions necessarily transcending the purview of the several constituent republics and autonomous areas, to which all education had been allotted as one of the subjects of "cultural autonomy". Somewhat analogous functions are entrusted to commissions, entitled respectively the Supreme Council of Physical Culture and an All-Union Council of Communal Economy. Finally, there is the Supreme Court of the USSR, with the all-important Procurator's Department, and the newly appointed Procurator for the USSR, whose duties appear to include a new and increased supervision of the activities of the OGPU itself, to which we shall recur. The aggregate of all these departments, directed by members of TSIK and immediately responsible to its plenum, make it one of the most important parts of the whole state organisation.

The Presidium of TSIK

The presidium of TSIK, consisting of 9 members from the presidium of the Union of Soviets, 9 from that of the Soviet of Nationalities, and 9 elected by a joint session of these two chambers, is a standing representative of TSIK itself. It chooses seven presidents, one from each constituent republic, to preside on successive days of the sessions alike of TSIK and of its presidium. All draft decrees of new taxes, or increases of old ones, have to be first submitted to this presidium. All decisions relating to the alteration or abolition of regulations as to any of the TSIK's, or their presidiums, in any of the constituent republics of the Union are invalid without the sanction of the presidium of the TSIK of the USSR.

Federal Machinery

The constitutional relations of the central federal organs of the USSR—such as the biennial All-Union Congress of Soviets, the Central Executive Committee (TSIK) and the Sovnarkom of People's Commissars—with the several governments of the constituent parts of the federal state, are in many respects unique. By the "fundamental law" the "sovereignty" of the seven constituent or "Union" republics is not only to be recognised by the USSR but is also to be protected by the federal power. This state sovereignty is expressly declared (in the Fundamental Law of the USSR of July 6, 1923) to be "restricted only within the limits stated in the present constitution, and only in respect of matters referred to the competence of the Union. *Beyond these limits each Union republic exercises its sovereign authority independently.* . . . Each Union Republic retains the right of free withdrawal from the Union . . . and for modification [or

limitation of [this provision] the agreement of all republics forming the USSR is required."¹

Each of the seven constituent republics accordingly has its own congress of soviets of the republic, with its own Central Executive Committee and its own Council of People's Commissars, as "supreme organ of authority" within the limits of its own territory. But it can have no People's Commissars for foreign affairs, defence, trade beyond the USSR, mercantile marine, transport by rail or river, or posts and telegraphs, because these are subjects entirely reserved to the federal administration. What is unusual, if not unique, in federal constitutions, old or new, is the statutory provision that the responsible cabinet of ministers (sovnarkom) of each constituent republic, shall admit, as members, the official agents, delegates or "plenipotentiaries" of the People's Commissars of the USSR for each of these exclusively federal departments, "with either an advisory or decisive voice", according as the Central Executive Committee of the constituent republic may determine. There is an exactly similar representation of these USSR commissariats in the sovnarkom of each of the 15 autonomous republics. In the majority of cases, we are informed, the "voice" is advisory or consultative only.

Accordingly, in the great Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic (RSFSR), which has over a hundred millions of inhabitants, there sat in 1935, in its cabinet of 24, no fewer than 9 of these federal officials of the USSR. Among the 23 members of the cabinet of the Ukraine, there were also 9 such officials of the federation. In that of the White Russian Socialist Soviet Republic there were also 9 out of 23. In that of the Transcaucasian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic, with a total membership of no more than 17, these officials of the federal government at Moscow (9) constitute an actual majority.² The specific function of these federal officials is doubtless to see that nothing is done or even initiated by the constituent or autonomous republic that would be inconsistent with federal policy in federal affairs. But it is stated that, as members of the local sovnarkoms or cabinets, they do not confine themselves to any specific class of questions, and that they take part in all the cabinet's deliberations. It is clear that their mere presence in the local cabinet in such numbers, even with no more than an "advisory" or a consultative voice, must necessarily exercise a constant influence towards unity of policy and action throughout the whole of the USSR.

This peculiar official interpenetration goes even further than the local cabinets of the constituent or autonomous republics, which necessarily

¹ Chap. i. of "Fundamental Law of the RSFSR adopted for the USSR, July 6, 1923"; see *Soviet Rule in Russia*, by W. R. Batsell, 1929, p. 308; and pp. 297-298, where an obviously incorrect interpretation of the statute is given.

² In the three smallest constituent republics the representation of the USSR is equally strong. In the Uzbek Republic Sovnarkom there sit 9 delegates of federal commissars in a sovnarkom of 23. In that of Turkmenistan there were also 9 out of a total of 23. In that of Tadzhikistan there were 9 out of 22. In the 15 autonomous republics the numerical proportion of delegates of federal commissariats is similar.

meet at the local republic capitals. In a dozen or so other cities of the USSR, especially those at which any foreign consuls are stationed, or which are near an important frontier, or which are much frequented by foreign travellers, there will be found resident a responsible officer of the USSR People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs at Moscow.¹ Doubtless the primary function of this "diplomatic agent" is to keep an eye on the activities of the foreign consuls, and to prevent any questions arising with regard to the treatment of foreign nationals. But it is of interest in this connection to notice that these official agents of the USSR federal government are usually, as a matter of course, made members of the highest administrative council meeting in the cities in which they reside. Thus the one at Leningrad is a member of the presidium of the executive committee of the soviet of the city of Leningrad; and the one who, down to 1934, resided at Kiev was a member of the corresponding body for the great oblast of Kiev—in both cases taking full part, and naturally exerting a great influence, in all the deliberations of these local authorities.²

Equally serviceable in ensuring unity of policy and action must prove the practice of what in the joint stock world is known as "interlocking directorates". Thus the seven presidents of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR, who are generally the most influential of the 27 members of its presidium, were in 1932, all of them simultaneously, either the presidents of the Central Executive Councils of the several constituent republics or of their sovnarkoms of People's Commissars. Among the other 20 members of this all-powerful central presidium at the same date were 6 other People's Commissars or cabinet ministers of the constituent republics, not one of which was thus without an influential representative actually inside the most important federal body, of the membership of which they together made up one-half. The position remains substantially the same in 1935.

There is yet another variety of this official interpenetration. Under the statutory constitution the various public departments, for the administration of which each constituent republic is responsible in its "sovereign capacity", are classified as "unified" and "non-unified". The unified departments are now those of finance and light industries, together with the recently added separate USSR Commissariat for the

¹ Such "diplomatic agents" are stationed at Leningrad, Vladivostock, Alexandrovsk (Sakhalin), Alma Ata and Khabarovsk in the RSFSR; at Kharkov and Odessa in the Ukraine; at Baku, Batoum and Erivan in the Transcaucasian Federation; at Kerki and Kouchka in Turkmenistan; and at Termez in Uzbekistan. To these have lately been added Arkhangelsk, Blagovestchensk, Chita, Okla (Sakalin), Kamchatka and Verkhneudinsk.

² There is still a further official interpenetration to be mentioned. On the executive of the oblast in the RSFSR and the Ukraine, whether ispolkom in the oblasts properly so called, or sovnarkom in the autonomous republics, there sit officials representing the USSR People's Commissariats of Land Transport (railways) and Posts and Telegraphs. (See *The Soviet State*, by B. W. Maxwell, 1934, p. 106.) Similar important officials of these and other federal departments sit on such powerful municipal soviets as those of Moscow and Leningrad, either by direct election in their capacity as citizens, or, where they are not thus elected, by cooption at the instance of the presidium.

collective farms (kolkhosi), with the still surviving independent peasantry. For these departments the People's Commissars of the federal government do not, as a rule, set up offices of their own in the constituent or autonomous republics, but are required, by statute, to make use of the local official staff, which is of course appointed and directed by, and immediately responsible to, the several People's Commissars of the different constituent or autonomous republics. In order to make this statutory provision work smoothly, the federal government has established a convention with the governments of the several constituent or autonomous republics, under which the official head of the local department concerned—usually but not necessarily a local "native" or resident—is always chosen after private consultation between the two governments, so that each may feel assured that the new officer will be faithful in the discharge of his curious double responsibility.¹ A similar unpublished convention is said to exist even with regard to the appointment of the People's Commissar himself, at any rate in finance, where the nomination is said to require the private sanction of the People's Commissar of Finance of the USSR.

There remain the non-unified departments, significantly enough, those directly connected with the "cultural autonomy" which is what the local "national minorities" are most concerned to maintain against the centralising and unifying encroachments of a federal administration. Over these departments, such as education, health and social welfare,² the People's Commissars of the several constituent or autonomous republics have, at least in theory, sole authority, in each case subject only

¹ It is not without interest to find that this unpublished convention was described differently by the two parties to it. From one side it was said that, on the occurrence of a vacancy, the choice made by this state government was submitted to Moscow for concurrence. From the other side it was said that the choice made by the federal government was submitted to the state capital for concurrence. It was also remarked that such arrangements should not be too closely scrutinised!

² With regard to education, as already mentioned, there is now a commission on university and higher technical institutes; another on technical education generally and a third on scientific research and progress, all three appointed by and responsible to the Central Executive Committee (TSIK) of the USSR, in order to deal with such questions as the allocation of new institutions which transcend the view of any local authority, and new scientific developments in the way of exploration and important experiments.

Two of the non-unified commissariats in the constituent and autonomous republics have lately been suppressed. That for labour has been transferred to the All-Union Central Committee of Trade Unions and its subordinate hierarchy of local trade union councils. The inspectorial activities of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection have been similarly transferred to the trade union hierarchy. But the disciplinary and other action taken as a result of these activities have been given to a new Control Commission responsible to the USSR Sovnarkom, in close collaboration with another new Control Commission appointed by the Central Committee of the Communist Party.

Two others of the non-unified commissariats in the constituent and autonomous republics have been either suppressed or brought much more under federal control. These are those for agriculture, which have, as above stated, been placed essentially in the position of unified departments, subordinate to the new USSR People's Commissars for State Farms (sovkhosi) and for collective farms (kolkhosi) together with the remaining independent peasantry. And the work of the Commissariat for Internal Affairs has been partly transferred to the new USSR People's Commissar for Internal Affairs (Narkomvnutdel), and partly subordinated to him as a unified department.

to his own Sovnarkom of People's Commissars and his own Central Executive Committee and Congress of Soviets. They have, however, all to realise that the formulation by the federal government of "basic principles" in these subjects, and its determination of the form of the economic organisation, together with its conduct of the whole of the nationalised industries and of foreign commerce—along with such all-important matters as finance and taxation and land and water transport—must not be hampered or interfered with.

It should be added that, whilst, as we have seen, the federal government is very powerfully represented in the cabinet of each constituent or autonomous republic, as well as in all the "unified" departments, and in many of its great cities, the governments of the constituent and autonomous republics have not, under the constitution, the reciprocal privilege of being formally represented either at the federal capital of Moscow or at the capitals of the other constituent republics. All the constituent republics do, in fact, maintain their own offices in Moscow, at which some of their own officials reside for convenience of making any necessary enquiries or representations concerning any part of the federal administration.¹ But such enquiry agents have no formal status under the constitution, and they apparently do not exist at any other capital than Moscow.

The Council of People's Commissars (Sovnarkom)

The greater part of the higher executive work in the USSR is entrusted, by the Central Executive Committee (TSIK), to the Council of People's Commissars (Sovnarkom), which directs the action of the principal government departments much as the groups of Cabinet Ministers do in parliamentary democracies. "What shall we call ourselves?" Lenin is reported to have asked Trotsky,² when, on finding themselves, in October 1917, in command of the state, they had to allot the offices among their colleagues. The designation "Minister" was rejected because of its association with tsarist autocracy and parliamentarianism. "People's Commissar" was viewed more favourably, and, after some discussion, adopted, at first for the RSFSR and then, successively, for all the constituent republics and even for the "autonomous republics" within them. The same designation was adopted in 1923 for the USSR. We need not trace the repeated

¹ Their names are printed in the official *Annuaire Diplomatique* published in French by the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs (Narkomindel) of the USSR. The 12 autonomous republics within the RSFSR are stated to be similarly represented at Moscow, but this is not mentioned in the *Annuaire*.

² "Not Minister, that is a repulsive designation." "We might say Commissar," suggested Trotsky, "but there are too many Commissars now." "Perhaps Chief Commissars. . . . No, 'chief' sounds too bad. What about People's Commissars? Well, this may be all right." "And the Government as a whole, the Soviet of People's Commissars," continued Lenin; "this will be splendid, it smells of revolution."

The anecdote circulates in various versions. See *Soviet Rule in Russia*, by W. R. Batsell, 1929, p. 544; *Lenin*, by L. Trotsky, p. 132; *My Life*, by the same, 1930, pp. 337-338.

changes made during the past eighteen years in the number and in the functions of these People's Commissars. For the USSR there are now People's Commissars for the following departments :

- (1) Foreign Affairs (NKID).
- (2) Defence (NKOBORONY).
- (3) Foreign Trade (NKVNESHTORG).
- (4) Means of Communication (Railways) (NKPS).
- (5) Heavy Industries (NKTYAZHPROM).
- (6) River Transport (NKWT).
- (7) Posts, Telegraphs and Radio (NKSVYAZ).
- (8) Forestry and Wood Industries (NKLES).
- (9) Light Industries (NKLEGPROM).
- (10) Agriculture (NKZEM)—added to the federal organisation in 1932, specially for the collective farms (kolkhosi) in addition to the commissariats for agriculture in the several constituent autonomous republics.
- (11) State Farms (NKSOVKHOSI).
- (12) Food Industry (NARKOMPISHCH).
- (13) Internal Trade (NARKOMVNUTORG).
- (14) Finance (NARKOMFIN).
- (15) Internal Affairs (NARKOMVNUTDEL).¹

There are, in addition, half a dozen other government departments of great importance, which are always represented in the Sovnarkom, although their heads are not styled People's Commissars.

There is, to begin with, (16) the Office of Administrative Affairs, a department which has the duty of seeing to it that all the decisions of the Sovnarkom are promptly and accurately put in course of operation.²

There is the very important State Planning Commission (Gosplan) with a president and six vice-presidents, which is represented in the Sovnarkom by its president.

There is the Council of Labour and Defence (STO) consisting of a president, three vice-presidents and six other members ; and the " Commission of Fulfilment " of this Council, consisting of a president, a vice-

¹ The above list is the outcome of various changes. Thus there was, until November 26, 1932, a People's Commissar for Foreign and Home Trade, until a decree of that date replaced him by a People's Commissar of Supplies and a People's Commissar of Foreign Trade. In 1934 the former was relieved of wholesale and retail trading for which a separate People's Commissar of Internal Trade was appointed. Similarly, the burden of the People's Commissar for Transport was lightened on January 30, 1931, by transferring maritime and river transport, with ports and harbours, to a new People's Commissar for Water Transport. Later in 1931 a new central administration was set up for road transport in the USSR, assisted by similar central administrations for the main roads in each of the constituent republics.

² We are informed that there is now no separate Director of Administrative Affairs. But the " Bureau of Administration " was expressly charged in order to secure " the exact and timely execution " of ordinances of the Sovnarkom by all institutions and officials thereof (decree of February 17, 1924, of the Sovnarkom ; *Soviet Rule in Russia*, by W. R. Batsell, 1929, p. 605).

We do not know whether the Sovnarkom has followed the new practice of the British Cabinet since 1914 of keeping regular minutes of even the most secret decisions.

president and three members—both these departments being at present represented in the Sovnarkom by their common president (Molotov).

There were also, in 1934, various other boards for special purposes, such as a State Yield Committee and a State Arbitration Committee, a Central Board for Road Transport and another for the Civic Air Fleet, a Concessions Committee and a Control Board of the North Sea Route. Some of these were only temporary. They may not enjoy representation in the Sovnarkom: their presidents may be summoned when their representative subjects come up for discussion.

Finally, but by no means least important, there was, until July 1934, the Union State Political Administration (the OGPU or GPU), whose permanent president, with his immense and almost uncontrolled authority within the wide sphere of his department, might be described as a facultative member of the Sovnarkom, as he went to its meetings whenever he chose to do so. This position was regularised, in July 1934, by the establishment of an All-Union People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (Narkomvnutdel), with its own People's Commissar in the Sovnarkom, under whose direction was placed the control and direction of the OGPU as "the Chief Department of State Security", alongside of five other "chief departments".

Lastly, we have to note the establishment in February 1934, at the instance of the Communist Party and in supersession of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, of a new and powerful organ of the USSR Sovnarkom, entitled the Commission of Soviet Control, consisting of sixty tried and trusted Party members nominated by the Central Committee of the Party. Its president will always be one of the vice-presidents of the Sovnarkom itself. This Commission of Soviet Control is charged specifically with seeing to it that every important decree or directive of the Central Executive Committee (TSIK) or Sovnarkom is actually complied with and carried into execution in every part of the USSR.¹ For this purpose it will have its own inspectors, accountants and other agents, who will reside permanently in the various republics, krais and oblasts of the Union and will be independent of any local authority. It will act in close conjunction with a Commission of Party Control, appointed by the Communist Party, which will apply disciplinary action to Party members, whilst leaving to the Sovnarkom and the several People's Commissars to do what is required to remedy the defects and deficiencies discovered.²

This score or so of ministers of state form at present the All-Union Council of People's Commissars (Sovnarkom), which may be taken to be the highest executive authority in the USSR, nearly corresponding to the cabinet in the governments of the western world; although it is by no means exclusively executive, and can enact decrees subject to ratification

¹ Its basic object is described as "the systematic, concrete and operative verification of the execution of the most important decisions of the government by all branches of the soviet and economic apparatus from top to bottom".

² See for this decree, *Pravda*, February 28, 1934.

by the Congress. In fact, in the USSR no small proportion of the constant stream of new decrees, definitely legislative in character and normally subject to eventual ratification by the All-Union Congress of Soviets, bear the signature of Molotov, as president of the All-Union Sovnarkom : this being often coupled with that of Kalinin, as president of the Central Executive Committee (TSIK) of the All-Union Congress of Soviets ; and, since 1930, even more usually with that of Stalin, as general secretary of the Communist Party.

This USSR Sovnarkom, or one or other of its committees, is almost daily in session in the Moscow Kremlin all the year round. Its actual procedure is wrapped in a secrecy exceeding even that of the British Cabinet. No minutes or records of proceedings are ever published. Apart from its formal decrees or " directives ", commanding action to be taken, the Sovnarkom of the USSR issues no *communiqués* to the public or the press. Political gossip—which is rife and rank in the diplomatic circle at Moscow, and among the foreign journalists there—is severely discouraged among all grades of soviet officials. Although the foreign correspondents are, from time to time, addressed by one or other of the Commissars, or on their behalf, the soviet newspapers are strictly forbidden to give currency to political gossip, or even to mention unauthorised rumours about what the Soviet Government is discussing or intending. The foreign correspondents are asked to conform to this rule. On the other hand, almost every department publishes its own weekly or monthly journal, which is full of reports of all branches of departmental work. Every office has its own " wall newspaper " written by its own staff about the internal life of the office. Moreover, in no country do statesmen so frequently take the public into their confidence by the publication in full, in the widely circulating newspapers, of long and detailed " resolutions " come to by the Central Executive Committee (TSIK) or by the Sovnarkom, going into all sorts of financial and technical details. Moreover, the newspapers are constantly being filled by verbatim reports of the lengthy addresses of ministers to conferences and meetings of all kinds, about the vicissitudes of the innumerable government undertakings, the new projects about to be put in operation and the general progress of the " Five-Year Plan ".

Of the way in which the ministerial organisation actually works, there is (as is normally the case in all countries) little available information. No one can describe the frequently changing relations that exist between the Sovnarkom and its president (Molotov) ; or between it and its other members ; or between it and the presidium of the Central Executive Committee (TSIK) of the All-Union Congress of Soviets ; or between it and such important bodies as the Commission of Labour and Defence (STO), in which Stalin and another important official of the Communist Party sit with eight People's Commissars ; or the secret working of the State Planning Commission (Gosplan) ; or the position of the Union State Political Commission (Ogpu) in its new form of People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs under the new commissar. It will be observed that among

the People's Commissars, or the members of the USSR Sovnarkom, we do not find the name of Kalinin, who acts as, and is commonly styled, president of the USSR, to whom the foreign ambassadors present their credentials and who is certainly one of the most influential of the presidents of the All-Union Congress of Soviets and of its Central Executive Committee (TSIK), and also of the presidium thereof. Nor do we find the name of Stalin, who is general secretary of the Communist Party, but who long held no government office other than that of one among the ten members of the Commission of Labour and Defence (STO). In 1935, however, Stalin was elected a member of the Central Executive Committee (TSIK), and likewise a member of its presidium, at the same time becoming chairman of the special commission for the revision of the electoral system. Menzhinsky, until his death in 1933 the president of the OGPU, though not a member, was definitely stated to have the right of attending the Sovnarkom whenever (and this was said to be rarely) he wished to do so. Probably Stalin and Kalinin have, in practice, the same privilege, and more frequently exercise it. Harmony among all these personages, and unity of action among the departments they control, are usually well maintained; but serious, and sometimes prolonged, public controversies over policy, with peremptory removals from office, and drastic exclusions from the Party, have taken place from time to time. Whatever changes of personnel may occur, no careful observer can doubt the essential stability of the government as a whole, and even its continuity of fundamental policy, coupled with a remarkable capacity for sudden changes in the forms and methods of its application, according to the lessons of experience.

We need not seek to detail the organisation of all the government departments which the ministers direct and control. One distinctive feature of the constitution has been, until 1934, that each People's Commissar was required, by statute, to have, besides one or more Assistants, a collegium of several persons of position and experience, with whom he was required confidentially to discuss all important proceedings or proposals.¹ This was professedly designed to ensure that he might take into account all relevant considerations, obtain all the available information and listen to the best advice. These colleagues of the minister were apparently not chosen always by himself, or even privately suggested for his approval, but were nominated by the Sovnarkom as a whole, sometimes deliberately as a check on too independent action. By a remarkable provision in the decree formally regulating the Sovnarkom, the collegium of each People's Commissar, and any member thereof, was given "the right of appeal" from any decision of the Commissar, "without suspending its execution, to the Sovnarkom as a whole".² We do not know whether this formal

¹ The collegium of the People's Commissar for Foreign Trade had more than a score of members.

² Decree of November 12, 1923, of the Central Executive Committee (TSIK); *Soviet Rule in Russia*, by W. R. Batsell, 1929, pp. 599-604.

right of appeal was ever exercised, or how often. The members of the collegium were usually prepared at any time to act as deputies for the Commissar, or to take his place if he was absent or incapacitated by illness.

Upon a decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party in 1934 that the collegia should be given up, these have been, one by one, abolished by separate decrees of the Central Executive Committee, which effected, at the same time, a certain amount of reorganisation of the business of each commissariat.

The authority of the All-Union Sovnarkom and its People's Commissars extends all over the USSR. With regard to the so-called All-Union or federal narkomats (or, as we should say, ministries), such as those dealing with foreign affairs; military and naval affairs (now styled defence); foreign trade; land transport; water transport; posts, telegraphs and radio; and now heavy industries, forestry and supplies, the very considerable staffs throughout the entire area of the USSR, as well as those maintained in foreign countries, are appointed and directed by the several All-Union People's Commissars, to whom these locally resident officials are solely responsible, without regard to the government of the particular republic in the territory of which they may be serving. Moreover, as we have mentioned, each People's Commissar for an All-Union or federal narkomat sends a delegate or plenipotentiary to each constituent and each autonomous republic, who has the right of sitting as a member in the local sovnarkom, with either a "consultative" or a "decisive" voice, according as the Central Executive Committee of that republic may have decided. The delegate so appointed by the All-Union Commissar is normally entrusted by him with the direction and control of the local staff of the All-Union narkomat. In the case of the "unified narkomats", now only three (Internal Trade, Agriculture and Finance), the All-Union People's Commissar has, apart from the persons actually employed in the numerous "nationalised" enterprises, no office staff exclusively his own in any of the constituent or autonomous republics, over and above that attached to the narkomat office at Moscow; members of which may, however, be detached for travel or temporary residence. For the local executive work of his narkomat in the several constituent or autonomous republics, including the RSFSR, he has to rely on a "unified staff" which is appointed and controlled by the corresponding People's Commissar of each such republic, but which is required to carry out any instructions received from the People's Commissar of the USSR. In order to make such an arrangement work smoothly there has grown up the remarkable private convention between the two governments that we have already described, namely, that the head of each department of the constituent republic's "unified" staffs, and sometimes the local People's Commissar, should be chosen and appointed by the two governments in joint private consultation, in order that each of them may be assured of his necessarily bipartite loyalty.

The non-unified narkomats are those dealing with the subjects in

which the constituent republics have been conceded "cultural autonomy". For these subjects (which have long comprised justice and police—except for the sporadic intervention of the USSR Supreme Court and the OGPU—education¹ and public health) there are no All-Union People's Commissars and no All-Union staffs of officials, and each constituent and autonomous republic has its own, which are subject only to the supervision and control of each republic's own Sovnarkom, Central Executive Committee and Congress of Soviets. But it must not be overlooked that the All-Union Congress of Soviets and its Central Executive Committee (TSIK)—not to mention the Central Committee of the Communist Party—exercise a great influence upon the nominally independent organs of the various constituent republics, so far at least as the "general line" and the "basic principles" of legislation and administration are concerned.

It should be added that USSR Sovnarkom has always appointed standing committees from its own membership, often with the addition of a few other persons. The number, and also the activities, of these standing committees have varied from time to time; and some of them have lingered in existence, taking up one subject after another as required, long after their main purpose had been fulfilled or become exhausted. Committees of this sort were at their height during the period of war communism, 1918–1921, and they have declined in importance as the system of administration has become more settled.²

The Council of Labour and Defence

The oldest of the standing committees of the USSR Sovnarkom is now the Council of Labour and Defence (STO),³ which was appointed by

¹ With regard to universities and the higher technical institutes and the promotion of scientific research, which have more than a local significance, it has been found convenient, as already mentioned, to give the local People's Commissars for Education the assistance of three federal commissions appointed by the Central Executive Committee (TSIK).

The position with regard to internal affairs was changed in July 1934 by the establishment of a USSR People's Commissar of Internal Affairs (Narkomvnutdel), who takes over much of the work formerly done by the local commissariats of Internal Affairs. Such a local commissariat had been abolished in January 1931, when its work in each constituent or autonomous republic was temporarily placed, partly under the local sovnarkom, and partly under a "chief office of communal authority". These functions are, from July 1934, discharged by the new USSR People's Commissar of Internal Affairs.

² The most important of these was the Supreme Economic Council, which, from 1918 to 1932, was in charge of the greater part of the industrial reconstruction; and to which we shall recur in our subsequent chapter on "Planned Production for Community Consumption".

³ See the decree of August 21, 1923, of the Sovnarkom as to the Council of Labour and Defence (STO), in *Soviet Rule in Russia*, by W. R. Batsell, 1929, pp. 620–622; also the incidental references in *Soviet Russia*, by W. H. Chamberlin, 1930, pp. 135–136; *Moscow, 1911–1913*, by Allan Monkhouse, 1934, p. 184; "The Organisation of Economic Life", by W. H. Chamberlin, in *Soviet Economics*, edited by Dr. G. Dobbert, 1933, p. 27.

The competence of the STO is defined as under:

(a) The consideration and practical carrying through the appropriate organs of the economic and financial plans of the Union of SSR.

the Sovnarkom's decree of August 21, 1923, embodied in the Code of Laws, 1932, "in order to carry on the economic and financial plans of the USSR, to verify them in accordance with economic and political conditions, as well as for the purpose of close direction of the commissariats of the Union in the sphere of economic activities and defence". It was from the outset placed permanently under the chairmanship of the president of the Sovnarkom for the time being. It is essentially a joint-committee of those People's Commissars who are principally concerned with economic issues and national defence. It now consists of a dozen members, specially appointed by the Sovnarkom, and including the People's Commissars for finance, railways, agriculture, food supplies, heavy industry and defence; the president of the planning department (Gosplan); the principal assistant of the People's Commissar of finance, who is also president of the state bank; and last but certainly not least, Stalin, who is the general secretary of the Communist Party.

The resolutions of STO come immediately into operation, but they must be forwarded at once to the Sovnarkom, which has the right to suspend or cancel any of them. Moreover, each member of STO, and also any People's Commissar of the Union, has a right to appeal to the Sovnarkom within three days; and the Sovnarkom of any constituent republic may also appeal without any time limit.

The student of the work of the Council of Labour and Defence will, we think, conclude that its work has been steadily decreased in scope and importance by the growth of other authorities, sometimes those springing directly from itself. For instance, the State Planning Department (Gosplan), with which we shall deal elaborately in our chapter entitled "Planned Production for Community Consumption", originally appointed by STO, and regularly established by statute of August 23, 1923, has become a gigantic and virtually independent department, directly represented by its president in the Sovnarkom, as well as in the Council of Labour and Defence. By the steadily improving plans that it lays for ratification before the Sovnarkom, the Central Executive Committee and the Central Committee of the Communist Party, it practically formulates the course for the year of every economic factor in the USSR. The Council of Labour and Defence (STO) still continues to be appointed annually, and to be an important influence, but its duties appear now to consist largely of odds and ends not assigned to any particular People's

(b) The consideration of problems concerning the defence of the country and the taking of measures for improvement of military affairs.

(c) The consideration of the condition of various provinces of the economic life of the country (finance, industry, trade and transport) which are of All-Union significance, and the taking of measures necessary to bring about their development.

(d) The direction of People's Commissariats of the USSR in the field of state economy and of the defence of the republic.

(e) Direct direction of economic councils (conferences) of union republics, of standing commissions and committees attached to the STO and consideration of their reports (as laid down in the Code of Laws, 1932, No. 15, article 85, par. 1).

(Decree of August 21, 1923.)

Commissar ; such as appointing committees on particular subjects of economic importance ; and acting from time to time as a mediating or arbitrating body between the competing projects or differing opinions of two or more of them.¹ Among the busiest of its several departments seems to be the Bureau for Inventions (BRIZ), which deals with the extraordinarily large number of suggestions and inventions and other improvements in industrial and other administration, which are submitted by workmen and others to the managements concerned. Naturally, their examination takes time, and is possibly sometimes perfunctory. The result is much complaint, and a more or less formal appeal of which the Bureau of Inventions (BRIZ) takes cognisance.

The Commissariats

So much for the constitution of the Sovnarkom as a whole, and its relation to the Central Executive Committee and the All-Union Congress of Soviets, on the one hand ; and, on the other, to the governments of the constituent and autonomous republics and the autonomous areas. The volume and importance of its work has naturally steadily increased with the growth of industrialism and the development of collectivism among the peasantry as well as among the factory workers. The life of a People's Commissar of the USSR is one of continuous labour and worry in coping with the difficulties with which every department is confronted. "It is commonly said in Moscow that there is hardly a commissar whose health has not been undermined as a result of overwork."² The cabinet ministers in other countries, for the most part, find time for a great deal of social intercourse in the wealthy society of the capital and the country houses, often interspersed with sport and amusements, and even occasional travel. So far as the authors have been able to form an opinion, the work of the USSR People's Commissars is more continuous and unremitting, as well as far less highly paid, than that of ministers elsewhere.

¹ "For example, in February 1932 it elected the committee for the holding-ready of agricultural products, a committee formed to conduct the campaign for the accumulation of agricultural stocks, formerly a work for which each economic commissariat was held responsible" ("Organisation of Economic Life", by W. H. Chamberlin, in *Soviet Economics*, edited by Dr. G. Dobbert, 1933, p. 27).

Other standing committees of STO may be mentioned, such as that on the development of the "sub-tropical" areas within the USSR ; that on the provision of agricultural products (storage) ; that on the kустar industry and the incops ; that on standardisation ; that on merchandise funds and trade regulations ; that on reserve foodstuffs ; that on goods traffic difficulties ; that on the shortage of live-stock ; that on grain elevators ; and that on the metric system.

² "Captains of Soviet Industry", by Professor Heinrich Poppelmann, in *Soviet Economics*, edited by Dr. G. Dobbert, 1933, p. 81. The German professor adds "coupled with privation". The People's Commissars, like all other Party members, have to live simply and sparsely ; but we doubt whether their health has suffered from anything to be properly termed privation. It would have been most unwise and imprudent for the USSR Government not to have seen to it that its ministers were adequately fed, clothed and housed.

This is involved, we suggest, in the fact that the government of the USSR undertakes a task that no other government has ever undertaken. In every other country, the government, whilst mildly interested in this or that particular reform that may, from time to time, seem to be required, habitually assumes that its business is to maintain the *status quo*. No government outside the USSR has ever frankly taken as its task the complete recasting of the economic and social life of the entire community, including the physical health, the personal habits, the occupations and, above all, the ideas of all the millions for whom it acts—in short, the making of a new civilisation.

We need not trouble the reader by describing each of the score or more of ministerial departments or commissariats, but, in order to bring out the difference between them and the ministries of western Europe, we are compelled to comment on the peculiarities of some among them.

The Commissariats dealing with Production and Trade

The greatest distinction between the Sovnarkom of the USSR and the cabinets of capitalist countries is in the nature of the business dealt with. In the capitalist countries by far the greater part of the production and distribution of commodities and services is conducted by private persons, with the object of making profit for themselves; and not by public departments aiming directly at the service of the community. In the Soviet Union, on the other hand, practically the whole of the heavy industries, and the larger part of the light industries, together with nearly all transport and foreign commerce, are conducted by public departments, which are in the main established, controlled and directed by the federal government.¹ The members of the Sovnarkom of the USSR accordingly find themselves charged with work of great magnitude and variety, with which the cabinet ministers of capitalist countries have little or nothing to do. The People's Commissars of the USSR are responsible, jointly or severally, not only for the railways and waterways, the posts and telegraphs, the currency and the taxation of an immense and widely scattered population, but also for the direction of the ten thousand or more separate manufacturing establishments in the USSR; the five thousand or more state farms (*sovkhosi*); the thousand or more mines of coal, ironstone, manganese, lead and other metals; the gigantic oil-plants, steelworks, electric generating stations, the considerable foreign trade, the growing mercantile marine, and what not.

For the greater part of this work of what the capitalist world would regard as business administration, eight separate People's Commissars are now, after many successive changes, individually responsible. The whole

¹ The enterprises of the various associations of owner-producers in industry and agriculture, and those of the consumers' cooperative societies, are described in the chapters relating to those subjects. The extent to which independent self-employment prevails in the USSR, and the spheres assigned to free trade and free competition, are described in the chapter "In Place of Profit", IX. in Part II.

of the exporting and importing of any commodities whatsoever, to or from any place outside the USSR, is directed by the People's Commissar of Foreign Trade (Narkomvneshtorg), who has his own subordinate commissions, or (in accordance with the law of the foreign countries concerned) even joint-stock companies, and his own network of commercial agents, all over the world. A large part of the service of food production and distribution for the population of the USSR was for several years under the People's Commissar for Food Supplies (Narkompishch). He has been replaced by two People's Commissars, one of Food Industry, dealing mainly, not with grain, but with all other foodstuffs (and with alcoholic drinks and tobacco) which need processing, preparing or canning; and the other of Internal Trade, charged with the organisation or control of all distribution of commodities, whether wholesale or retail. There is also a People's Commissar for the State Farms (sovkhosi), which are administered as if they were factories of grain, flax or cotton, beet, live-stock or dairy produce. The difficulties in getting in the harvest, especially in the North Caucasus and in certain parts of the Ukraine, led, in 1932, to the subordination of all the seven People's Commissars for Agriculture in the constituent republics to a separate All-Union People's Commissar for Agriculture (including the kolkhosi as well as the supervision of the surviving independent peasantry), in order to organise and direct the extensive "drive" on the incompetent, negligent or recalcitrant peasants in the collective farms from one end of the USSR to the other. The "heavy" industries, which include the mining of coal, peat and lignite, and of iron, manganese, lead and other ores; the extraction of oil and the manufacture of numerous oil products; the making of pig-iron and steel; and the manufacture of machinery of every kind, are placed under the new narkomat of Heavy Industries (NKTYAZHPROM). The "light" industries, principally engaged in making commodities from textiles or leather for household use, are now subject to a new narkomat for Light Industries (Legprom). Another new narkomat, that for timber industries, directs the exploitation of the forests (les), which, it is believed, can be economically combined, at different seasons, with the agricultural work on the collective farms (kolkhosi); and the same People's Commissar will direct the manufacture of paper and other timber products, on the one hand, and of innumerable articles of furniture on the other.

In accordance with the directions of these eight People's Commissars, and of the State Planning Commission (Gosplan), the full description of which we reserve for a subsequent chapter, all the innumerable separate industrial establishments in the USSR (other than those of the consumers' cooperative societies, and those of the artels organised in industrial cooperatives) are grouped under boards or commissions called sometimes trusts and sometimes combines.¹ These boards or commissions are

¹ We gather that the term trust is now usually employed in the USSR for what is, in our language, a "horizontal" combination, in which factories or other establishments

appointed by the People's Commissar in each case. The usual form has been a board consisting of a president, a secretary and from three to a dozen other members, all of whom give their whole time to their duties, which combine those of a director and a manager in an important English industrial company. The aim has been to secure, among these members of each trust or combine—so an American enquirer was informed in 1932—"a 'Red' director, a technical director, a factory director, a commercial director and a general director. All except the 'Red' director must have had experience in the industry",¹ qualifying each of them for supervision and direction from their several angles of vision. But the exact forms of the trusts, as well as their grouping under particular commissariats, are frequently changed, as experience indicates defects in organisation or improvements in efficiency.

The industrial enterprises in the USSR are, on the average, much larger than those of other countries (even the United States), many having over 20,000 employees and some over 50,000 (comparable rather with Imperial Chemical Industries, Limited, or the United States Steel Corporation). Each combine unites a number of enterprises that produce for other members of the combine. Each trust has to manage a number of factories manufacturing the same class of commodities, either in a particular region or else widely dispersed throughout the whole USSR. Each trust or combine, with more or less confirmation by the People's Commissar, and with the concurrence of the workers in their several trade unions, appoints, for each factory or plant, a general manager; and often assigns to the enterprise particular specialist technicians, either Russian or foreign. The general manager, often styled director, with more or less consultation with his leading officials and recruiting committees, appoints the whole staff of the factory, and, with many responsible heads of departments, continuously directs all their operations, including every associated section, such as that of medical supervision and treatment of all the

producing similar commodities are united for management and sales. The term combine or combinat seems to be used for what in our language is a "vertical" combination in which establishments are included which produce materials or components that other members of the combination require, as coal-mines may be united, on the one hand, with forests producing pit props, and, on the other, with blast furnaces and wagon works.

A useful source of information is the British Government S.O. Paper of 1931, "The Organisation of Foreign Trade of the USSR", by G. Paton, C.B.E. See also *Fifteen Years of the Foreign Trade Monopoly of the USSR*, by A. P. Rosenholz, People's Commissar of Foreign Trade, Moscow, 1933, 30 pp.

¹ *Russia in Transition*, by Elisha M. Friedman, 1933, p. 240.

Stalin thought that too much of the detailed management of the industries was assumed by the board itself and done by writing minutes one against the other. In his address of June 1931, to a meeting of industrial leaders, he said: "It is necessary that our combines should replace management by collegium with individual management. The position at present is that in the collegium of a combine there are ten or fifteen men, all writing papers, all carrying on discussions. To continue to manage in this way, comrades, will not do. We must put a stop to paper leadership, and adopt genuine, business-like Bolshevik methods of work. Let a chairman and several deputy chairmen remain at the head of the combine. That will be quite enough to take care of its management. The remaining members of the collegium should be sent to the factories and mills" (*New Conditions: New Tasks*, by Josef Stalin, 1931, p. 20).

employees, and that of the canteen and restaurant which serves their meals; and (by a recent decree) also the former "consumers' cooperative" attached to the enterprise, which now produces for consumption by the employees all sorts of farm produce, and retails to them nearly all the other commodities that they purchase.

We reserve for our subsequent chapter on "Planned Production for Community Consumption" detailed analysis of how all this governmental enterprise works. But we may observe, at this point, that, vast as is the aggregate of business in the USSR, its organisation and management by a hierarchy of boards and directors will not appear, to the American financier, as novel or as impracticable as it does to the British economist or banker. It is comparable to nothing more extraordinary than the organisation of one or two hundred industrial leviathans like the United States Steel Corporation or Imperial Chemical Industries, Limited; and their subjection to a supreme coordinating directorate of half a dozen "supermen"—a consummation easily imagined by the potentates of Wall Street! It is the purpose of the enterprise in the USSR, not the method of its organisation, that is so novel. To provide for the well-being of the whole people, on a steadily rising standard of life, rather than the securing of profit for a relatively small minority, is the fundamental purpose of the Sovnarkom of People's Commissars.

The State Planning Commission (Gosplan)

What has become one of the most important departments of the Soviet Government, the State Planning Commission, had its start in Lenin's conception of a vast plan of electrification covering the whole area of the USSR. This became a programme by its adoption by the Eighth All-Union Congress of Soviets in December 1920. A commission, appointed in April 1921, was transformed by a decree of December 22, 1922, into a permanent State Planning Commission, and by another decree of August 21, 1923, its scope was extended to the whole of the USSR. The modestly named "control figures" of Gosplan were, in 1927, given the form of a Five-Year Plan of Production for the USSR, which was formally adopted by the Fifteenth Congress of the Communist Party in 1928, and by the Central Executive Committee (TSIK).

Gosplan, which now consists of a president and seven other members or assistants, has a staff of statistical and technical experts that exceeds a thousand in number. In every constituent republic and every autonomous republic or oblast, and in every town having more than twenty thousand inhabitants, there are planning commissions subordinate to the central department at Moscow. We reserve our account of this unique administration for Part II. of this book.

The People's Commissar of Finance

There can be no doubt of the commanding position in the soviet economy that is held by the USSR Commissariat of Finance;¹ but this position is not easy to define in the terms employed by western governments. The People's Commissar of Finance may be relatively quite as powerful as the British Chancellor of the Exchequer or the American Secretary of the Treasury; but his sphere of action differs markedly from that of either of them. The huge Budget of income and expenditure that he annually presents to his ministerial colleagues includes much that is not under his control. Even much of the taxation is assessed and collected, not by any service under his own command, but by officers on the financial staffs of the governments of the constituent republics. And he has to submit his Budget proposals for the concurrence of the president of the Planning Department even before he can lay them before the Sovnarkom. These are vital differences in financial structure that call for analysis.

The first peculiarity of the Budget of the Soviet Union is that it is not confined to the public services of the Union itself, but includes, in addition to every department of federal administration, all the departments of the several Union and autonomous republics, the complete Budgets of which have to be incorporated by the USSR People's Commissar in his own. In a sense, indeed, it comprehends and covers much more. For though the Budget of each Union or autonomous republic does not include separately every item of receipts and outgoings of every subordinate authority,² from the autonomous area, the krai or the oblast

¹ Voluminous as are the Russian sources for taxation and finance, there is relatively little about the actual organisation and working of the soviet departments themselves. Of what is easily accessible to the western student, the most important work is that entitled *Soviet Policy in Public Finance, 1917-1928*, by G. Y. Sokolnikov and associates, edited by L. Hutchinson and Carl C. Plehn, 1931. The most systematic and complete survey is that given in *Das Steuer-system Sowjet Russlands*, 1926, and *Die Finanz und Steuerverfassung des USSR*, 1928, both by Paul Haensel, of which a popular summary, very critical in tone, was published by him as *The Economic Policy of Soviet Russia*, 1930. See also the articles on "Taxation in Soviet Russia" and "Financial Reform in Soviet Russia" and "The Financing of Industry in Soviet Russia", by Margaret S. Miller, in *Slavonic Review* for 1925, 1927, 1930, 1931 and 1932; *Russian Economic Development since the Revolution*, by Maurice Dobb, 1928; *Currency Problems and Policy of the Soviet Union*, by L. N. Yurovsky, 1928; *Die russische Währungsreform des Jahres 1924*, by H. J. Seraaphim, Leipzig, 1925; *Russian Currency and Banking, 1914-24*, by Z. F. S. Katzenellenbaum, 1925; *Russian Debts and Russian Reconstruction*, by Leo Pasvolksy and H. G. Moulton, 1924.

Detailed figures as to finances are to be found in the *Soviet Year-Book* for 1930 (the last published in English), pp. 380-446; and in the corresponding volumes annually published in Russian. A good description (in German) by the People's Commissar of Finance (G. F. Grinko) himself will be found in *Das Finanzprogramm des USSR für das vierte und letzte Jahr der ersten Piatiletka*, Moscow, 1932, 62 pp.

² By the decrees of August 21, October 10 and December 10, 1921, it was sought to separate the Budgets of the local authorities from those of the central government, on the principle of "covering local expenditure from local resources". By further decrees of May 25 and 26, August 17 and 31 and November 16, 1922, the financial obligations of local authorities were further defined. On November 12, 1923, the so-called "Temporary

down through the rayon and city to the village soviet itself, the Budget of each constituent republic depends in the main on the finances of the local authorities below it. They all possess a large measure of practical autonomy in local expenditure on education and health, roads and bridges, agriculture and the needs of labour, and they keep for themselves most of what they locally collect. But they are mainly dependent on the grants that they receive, or the allocations (or deductions) which they are allowed to retain out of the centralised taxes, together with the surcharges which they obtain permission to make for their own benefit on certain of them. Their separate Budgets have to be approved by their immediate superior authority, and these Budgets are expected to balance. But the balance is usually reached only by increasing the aforesaid grants, allocations and surcharges made out of the aggregate revenues of each republic as a whole. Rather more than half the total expenditure of the RSFSR, the Ukraine and the other constituent republics goes in this way in subventions to their subordinate local authorities.¹ And thus it is the USSR Commissariat of Finance that has, in effect, to meet the net charge of all the public expenditure of every authority in the USSR.

This situation is all the more peculiar to western eyes in that the USSR Commissariat of Finance has no staff of its own in the innumerable areas of all the selosoviets, rayons, cities, oblasts and republics whose financial needs ultimately fall upon the USSR Budget. Finance is a subject standing between those which are exclusively federal in administration (such as railways and foreign trade) and those which are exclusively local in administration (such as those of elementary education and local sanitation). Finance is committed in each union or constituent republic to a "unified" commissariat, appointed by and responsible to the People's Commissar of Finance of the republic; but directed equally to carry out the instructions, in matters interesting the Soviet Union generally, of the USSR People's Commissar of Finance. In order to make this arrangement work smoothly, there has come to be, as we have already explained, a convention that the chief permanent official of each unified commissariat shall be appointed only after consultation between the two People's Commissars, to whom the official will owe a peculiar loyalty.

It should be added, however, that the USSR People's Commissar for Finance is dependent on the administrations of the several Union or constituent republics only for a relatively small part of his resources. Apart from taxation, there are the large receipts from the railway service and those from the post office and telegraphs, which are managed centrally by his own colleagues on the Sovnarkom, the People's Commissars for

Regulations", modified by the law of October 29, 1924, and the "ruling" of April 25, 1926, systematically organised both income and expenditure. But the desired end of securing a balance between the two sides of the account was attained only by a continuous increase in the grants, allocations and surcharges, by which the burden was largely assumed by the finances of the republics.

¹ See the figures from 1924-1925 to 1927-1928 in *Soviet Policy in Public Finance*, by G. Y. Sokolnikov, 1931, pp. 405-406.

those departments. He has also at his command the extensive proceeds of the federal government's mines and oilfields, and of its enormous manufacturing and trading enterprises. These receipts, on which he has only to agree with his ministerial colleagues in charge of the various departments, amount to several times as much as is raised directly by taxation, either by the federal government or by any of the local governments.

When the single Budget for the Soviet Union has been drawn up, incorporating the separate Budgets of the Union or constituent republics—and this is the work of the Budget Department of the USSR Commissariat of Finance—it is not the People's Commissar of Finance who has the last word, either on the items of expenditure to be incurred or on the taxation to be levied. The draft has first to be submitted to Gosplan (the State Planning Commission), which goes over every item on both sides, scrutinising it from the standpoint of the economic prospects for the ensuing year. For instance, the quantities involved in the various enterprises, alike of materials, components and labour force, have to be brought within the anticipated total output. The cost of any imports required has to be provided for by a corresponding value in exports, which will involve a deduction from the amount of commodities that would otherwise have passed into internal consumption. "This", it is authoritatively stated, "is the subject, every year, of frequent and warm controversies between the Narkomfin (People's Commissariat of Finance) and the Gosplan, when the control figures are being fixed."¹ Gosplan is practically in a position to insist on whatever modifications in the Budget that such considerations involve. Then, at last, the Budget, so modified, can be laid before the USSR Sovnarkom, which will decide any difference of opinion on the Budgets between the People's Commissars of Finance of the several Union or constituent republics, or between any of them and the USSR People's Commissar of Finance. Finally, the USSR Budget, together with those of the several Union or constituent republics incorporated in it, will be ratified and become law by decision of the Central Executive Committee (TSIK) of the USSR.

Notwithstanding all this complication of authorities, and this dispersion of powers, the USSR Commissariat of Finance has, in the past eighteen years, secured a vast improvement in financial accounting, supervision and control. The Budget figures, once finally decided, cannot be departed from without express authority. Transfers (virements) from item to item are allowed only sparingly and then by the highest authority only. The principle is generally enforced that all the revenues derived from various sources must be paid to the single treasury of the USSR under the People's Commissar of Finance; and this treasury becomes the source of all state expenditure, both of the Soviet Union and of the separate republics. As far as possible, it is insisted that all receipts of every public authority should be immediately paid in to one of the numerous branches of the State Bank. To see to all this, and to keep things straight, the

¹ *Soviet Policy in Public Finance*, by G. Y. Sokolnikov and others, 1931, p. 338.

Commissariat of Finance has become a huge congeries of departments, including those for (1) the Budget; (2) Currency; (3) State Revenue; (4) Taxation; (5) Economics and Finance; (6) Control and Audit; (7) Local Finance, together with (8) Central Administration. In addition, the Commissariat includes (9) the State Savings Bank; (10) the State Insurance Department (Gosstrakh), insuring against death, fire, hail, cattle plagues and loss of goods in transit; and (11) the office for note and currency issue, with its printing works and mint.

We need say little of the system of taxation properly so called. It is, of course, avowedly based, not on principles of "equality of sacrifice" or maximum yield, but on those of "building up the socialist state", by penalising any remnant of profit-making enterprise (which is regarded as criminal); and as even Jeremy Bentham recommended, by drastically taxing relatively large incomes and inheritances, whilst exempting from any direct imposts the mass of poor folk. The main direct taxes are now few and simple. The principal is a tax on the output or turnover of all industrial enterprises of any magnitude, which are now all state-owned; coupled with a single agricultural tax on all agricultural enterprises according to their size or importance. In both cases the assessment is mitigated in various ways in favour of the collectivised concerns, and of those enterprises which it is part of public policy to encourage, to the detriment of the surviving individual peasant or producer. Along with these main instruments of revenue rank the taxes on incomes¹ and on inheritances, which are drastically progressive, so as to operate in a similar direction. The indirect taxation, including excise (mostly on alcoholic drinks and tobacco), customs (very small in yield) and stamps on legal transactions, has been steadily modified in the direction of simplification and (with the great exception of sugar) concentration upon undesirable luxuries and upon expenditure not much incurred by the mass of the people.²

¹ The rates of Income Tax are extremely complicated, varying not only with the income, but also according to the category in which the taxpayer is placed. The lowest rates are those payable by workers and salaried employees, which are from 80 kopecks per month to (for those getting over 500 roubles per month) $3\frac{1}{2}$ roubles per month for the excess over 500 roubles. The rates for persons of the "first category", including authors, artists and inventors, rise from 1 per cent to (for income in excess of 20,000 roubles monthly) 38 per cent. In the second category are kustars, not employing hired labour; dentists, holders of patents, etc. These pay from $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent up to (for excess over 24,000 roubles per month) 50 per cent. In the third category come non-cooperative kustars employing hired labour; retail traders; the clergy and others living on unearned income. Their tax rates rise from 5 per cent up to (for excess over 24,000 roubles per month) 87 per cent (Regulations of May 17, 1934, in (Russian) *Economic Life*, May 24, 1934). The high incomes are, of course, extremely rare; though popular authors, dramatists and singers occasionally obtain very large amounts.

² "The general plan [of taxation] may be stated simply as follows:

"(1) The authority for any and all taxes (and purposes of expenditure) emanates by legislation on decrees from the central government. (2) Certain taxes are uniform throughout the country, but old local taxes, deep rooted in the local history, are maintained. (3) The republics, the component commonwealths of the Union, are permitted (a) to retain a large part, even up to practically all, of certain taxes collected within their boundaries (this is what is called the 'method of deductions'), and (b) to levy surtaxes or

Where the USSR People's Commissar of Finance is free from interference by the governments of the several constituent republics is in the important domain of currency and banking, where he has his own mint and issue department, handing out the notes printed at his own establishment. We need not describe the efforts that were necessary to rise from the swamp of a universal depreciation of the rouble through unlimited printing of paper money during the Civil Wars. Under the able direction of Mr. G. Y. Sokolnikov, who became People's Commissar of Finance in 1924, the rouble was rehabilitated through the chervonetz; and has now, it is claimed, attained a new status of its own superior to that of the dollar and the pound. What is remarkable and peculiar is the soviet policy of secluding its currency from contact with that of any other country. No rouble or kopeck can lawfully be taken out of the USSR, and none can be brought in. Whatever is purchased from abroad is paid for in *valuta*, procured by exporting sufficient commodities to realise in *valuta* the amount of the obligations to foreigners. It is thus only that the variations in world prices of the oil, timber, furs, manganese and wheat that the USSR exports (whether these variations are caused by over-production or by any other factor) trouble the USSR People's Commissar of Finance, not the fluctuations in the foreign currencies themselves. The catastrophic fall in the world price of textiles, whether due to Japanese economies in production costs or to the depreciation of the yen, do not disturb the USSR Government, which buys just as much or as little of Japanese textiles as it finds convenient.

Banking and Saving

The complete control over currency and credit is facilitated by the federal government's monopoly of banking. The State Bank of the USSR (Gosbank), with its couple of thousand branches all over the country, has now become the only bank at which any of the state industrial enterprises is allowed to have a current account. Gosbank is now required to limit its overdrafts or other accommodations, not only to the amounts prescribed for each enterprise in the General Plan, but also to the separate operations that have to be undertaken at each season of the year. All sales by the enterprise must be paid for not in currency but by transfer, by the purchaser, of the price to the seller's current account. Immediately the bank notices any falling behind in receipts, or any excess in expenditure, beyond the figures in the Plan, this has to be notified to the Sov-

rates over and above the Union tax rates, on certain other taxes which are primarily for the Union (this is called the 'method of additions'). . . . (4) A number of purely local taxes have been continued, with modifications, for the use of the republics or of their local subdivisions. Finally there are the 'grants in aid', handed down by the central government and by the republics, for designated government purposes, such as schools. There are in addition, the grants to industries for the 'development of' national economy; which are spoken of as non-governmental outlays, since there are few corresponding direct grants of that sort in other countries" (*Soviet Policy in Public Finance*, by G. Y. Sokolnikov and associates, 1931, p. 394, footnote by the American editors).

narkom, by whom instant notice is taken. The other banks operating in the USSR have been reduced to four, confined respectively to the special purposes of affording long term credit to state enterprises for industry and electrification, or for agricultural improvements in the sovkhosi and kolkhosi, and for carrying out the financial transactions involved in foreign trade.

The State Savings Bank with its own 20,000 branches, and its use of the local post offices in all the cities and substantial villages of the USSR in which it has no branch, is also under the People's Commissar of Finance. The number of depositors, and the total sum standing to their credit, increases annually at a great rate. These popular savings, in 1934 amounting to more than one thousand million roubles, by twenty-five million depositors, are encouraged by interest at the rate of 8 per cent, and by total exemption of such deposits from income tax, inheritance tax and various stamp duties. The total assets of the Savings Bank are invested in the USSR Government loans.¹

Insurance

A useful department of the USSR Commissariat of Finance, of which little is heard abroad, is that of insurance, which in the USSR is a state monopoly. Insurance has long been compulsory, outside the cities, on buildings against fire, on crops against storms of hail, and on horned cattle and horses against disease. In the cities it is optional on buildings and their contents, as well as against losses in transit upon goods of all kinds. Life insurance is also undertaken on an entirely optional basis.

In order to make the economic security of the village as complete as possible the system of compulsory insurance was reformed and greatly extended by a decree of the USSR Sovnarkom in July 1934.² This provides for the compulsory insurance of property, crops and stock, in collective farms, hunting, fishing and other primary producers' cooperatives in village districts. The insurance is to apply to all buildings, equipment, tools, etc., means of transport, agricultural products for consumption or sale, raw materials and stores of goods. These are insured against fire, flood, earthquake, landslides, storms, hurricanes, cloudbursts, lightning and boiler explosions. Greenhouses are insured against hailstorms;

¹ The following statistics will be of interest :

Year	Number of Branches and Sub- offices	Depositors' Balances, in millions of roubles	Number of Individual Depositors, in thousands
1929	20,364	315.8	7172.1
1931	35,184	494.4	13671.7
1933	57,556	974.0	23903.3
1934	48,573	1192.6	25120.0

² The decree will be found in (Russian) *Economic Life*, July 20, 1934; and in *Russian Economic Notes* of the United States Department of Commerce, August 30, 1934. Notwithstanding the government monopoly, the consumers' cooperative societies are allowed to have mutual insurance funds of their own for insuring their own property against fire.

seedings and plantings of orchards, vineyards, etc., against hailstorms, cloudbursts, storms and fire; plantings of crops and vineyards against freezing, heating and flooding; special and technical plants, as listed, against elemental destruction, insect and other pests and plant diseases; plantings of flax and hemp against drought; seedings of red clover against drought and freezing; stock 6 months old and over against the risk of death; horses, camels, asses, mules, hinnies and reindeer from 1 year old up, and pedigreed stock from 6 months up, against death; sheep, goats and hogs from 6 months, against death; hunting- and fishing-boats against elemental destruction while afloat and on stocks; and hunting- and fishing-equipment and gear against elemental destruction. Collective farm members, individual farmers, workers, employees, cottage (kustar) workers and trade workers must insure their individual buildings and workshops against fire, flood, earthquake, etc., in the same way as collective property, and their crops, plantings, orchards, vineyards, stock, hunting- and other boats, on the same basis as those belonging to collectives. This extraordinarily complete insurance is to apply in all sections of the country where similar insurance has been in force hitherto, and may be adopted in other districts where it has not prevailed. Industrial and special crops other than those listed may also be insured against elemental destruction by agreement between the governments of the constituent republics and the Gosstrakh (State Insurance Agency). They may also arrange higher rates for an insurance against deterioration of quality of tobacco and makhorka as the result of hailstorms.

Property belonging to "kulak" households and to individuals rated in category III. of the Income Tax schedule, also to others deprived of the vote, may not be insured.

The decree lists in detail the amounts paid in case of loss, also the premiums to be paid by collective farms and farmers, showing an average reduction of 7 per cent from the rates in force in 1934. Young stock up to 6 months or 2 years, according to kind, are insured without premium, as are areas seeded above the seeding plan. As an encouragement to cattle-raising and increasing the market supply of animal products, a 20 per cent reduction is made in premiums for pedigreed animals and for stock on stock-farms. Collectives with approved fire protection, and showing a good record in raising and caring for stock, enjoy reductions in premiums of from 25 to 50 per cent, according to equipment. A 50 per cent reduction also applies for the first year for colonists moving to a new settlement. Special reductions of part or all of premiums apply to collectives and individual farmers in the nomadic and semi-nomadic districts of Turkmenistan, Tadzhikistan, the Kazak and Kirghiz republics, the Kalmyk oblast, and the Far North. A similar reduction is made for certain classes of collective farmers, as "heroes of the Union", former and present military and other similar servants and families of those who have fallen in the struggle with the kulaks or of forest workers killed on duty. Collectives and individuals who have suffered from elemental destruction

in districts where insurance did not prevail may be granted partial reductions in premiums, according to the circumstances, but not more than 90 per cent of the premiums.

Unfortunately we have no recent statistics as to the amount of property thus insured, but it is known to have been steadily increasing. The compulsory insurance of peasants' buildings against fire, which had long existed under the zemstvos, covered in 1928 over twenty million homes at an average of 302 roubles. At the same date sixty million desyatins or hectares were insured against hail, and thirty million horned cattle and nine million horses against disease. About 12 per cent of these, being those of the poorest peasants, were insured without premium. But whereas the average fire premium charged by the zemstvos was, in 1914, 1.08 per cent, that charged by the Government in 1927-1928 was only 0.72 per cent. The total sum thus compulsorily insured against these various calamities was in 1928-1929 over 11,000 million roubles, the annual premium receipt over 109 million roubles, and the total payments for losses 95 million roubles.

The various branches of voluntary insurance have increased even more than those under compulsion. Premiums paid for voluntary fire insurance in 1927-1928 amounted to 57 million roubles, and those for voluntary insurance of goods in transit to 7½ million roubles. Life insurance proceeds more slowly, but the 145,900 persons insured for 97 million roubles in 1925-1926 had grown to 385,000 for 214 million roubles in 1928.¹

The Commissariat of Defence

One of the USSR Commissariats that is both like and unlike the corresponding ministry in a western country is that dealing with the armed forces. The People's Commissar for Military and Naval Affairs—a post held in succession by Trotsky (1918-1923), Frunze (1923-1926) and, since 1926, by K. E. Voroshilov—stood formerly at the head, not of an ordinary

¹ Another branch of popular finance, widely extended in western Europe—that of pawnbroking, *mont de piété*, or “lombard”—is not much in evidence in the Soviet Union. We are told that pawnbroking offices, dating from tsarist times, are maintained only in about twenty-six cities, and there exclusively by the city soviets. They are now nominally under the supervision of the USSR Commissariat of Finance, but are not regarded with favour. Pawnbroking, as carried on for profit, necessitates the periodical sale by auction of unredeemed pledges. This practically involves the existence of a class of dealers who make a practice of buying such unredeemed pledges, in order to sell them at a profit—a practice which has, in the USSR, been made a criminal offence. Hence the surviving municipal pawnshops find a difficulty in disposing of their unredeemed pledges. Their occasional auctions are sometimes held inside the great factories, where the only purchasers are the workmen buying for family use. Sometimes admission to the auction is confined to persons presenting a card of trade union membership. We gather that it is hoped that pawnbroking can eventually be superseded, on the one hand, by the friendly loans of the Mutual Aid Societies (see pp. 713-715), and, on the other, by the numerous retail shops maintained by the city municipalities for the sale of unwanted commodities on a commission of 25 per cent. The practice of pawning winter clothing on the advent of spring, in order to get it protected from theft or moth during the summer months, may be superseded by a system of communal storage.

collegium, but of a "Revolutionary Council of War", consisting of ten members, appointed by the Sovnarkom mainly from among officers of experience in the various branches of the service. In 1934, in accordance with the general decision to abolish all the collegia attached to the USSR Commissariats, the Revolutionary Council of War was brought to an end; at the same time—perhaps as a gesture, emphasising the conclusion of so many Pacts of Non-Aggression—the commissariat was given the new title of People's Commissariat of Defence.¹ The Revolutionary Council of War has been replaced by a purely advisory Military Council consisting of 80 members, over whose meetings the People's Commissar himself presides. This council includes the principal commanders of the various departments of the defence forces, including specifically the Far Eastern Army and the Military Air Fleet, together with the president of the great voluntary organisation called Osoaviakhim.

This Commissariat of Defence has, of course, an extensive organisation of its own throughout the whole Union, for the maintenance, training and education of the nine hundred thousand men under arms in the army, navy and air force. We can ourselves say nothing useful as to the military efficiency of these three forces, which are combined in a single administration. It is a mere matter of observation that the troops seen in the streets or travelling by train or steamboat, in camp or in barracks, are obviously not only well fed and well clothed but also relatively intelligent and well behaved. Military experts declare these forces to be competently drilled, well armed and highly mechanised; some even going so far as to say that the USSR is at least as well prepared for war as any other nation.² The air force appears to be exceptionally formidable and in a state of great efficiency.

The Commissariat of Defence is organised in two main divisions, administrative and operative. Under them there are half a dozen separate branches, each headed by a commander of a competence proved in long service. The Commissariat is specially represented by confidential agents in the various constituent and autonomous republics.

The Army as a School

The feature in which the military forces of the Soviet Union seem to us to differ most significantly from those of western Europe (and also of

¹ Decree of USSR Central Executive Committee (TSIK) of June 20, 1934; in pursuance of decree of March 15, 1934, on governmental and industrial organisation by the same authority, in conjunction with the USSR Sovnarkom; and the resolutions of the Seventeenth All-Union Congress of the Communist Party. The *Moscow Daily News* of June 22, 1934, comments on the change significantly.

² It is curious that some of the critics of the USSR, who declare that the government and the workers alike show hopeless incompetence and inefficiency in industrial production, transport and agriculture, often go on to say that the highly mechanised and scientifically equipped army of the Soviet Union, with its extensive service of home-made automobiles and aeroplanes, as well as guns and munitions of every description, has reached a degree of technical efficiency so great as to render it a menace to the rest of the world!

Japan)—a feature that may well be of the greatest importance to the community—is the rôle that this part of the social structure plays in the cultural development of the whole people.¹ “The Red Army”, it is officially stated, “is not only a military school; it is also a school of culture.” “The Red Army”, it is also declared, “is essentially a school of citizenship.” Nothing is more resented by the communist than the conception of an army trained only as a military force, separate and apart from the mass of the people. Thus, in the Red Army the greatest care has been taken to prevent the upgrowth of anything approaching to a military caste. Neither the commanders (meaning the officers), even of highest grade, nor the rank and file think of themselves as separate from, or in any way superior to, other people who are serving the community in industry or in agriculture, in medicine or in civil administration. Whilst serving their time with the colours, both commanders and men temporarily suspend their membership of their trade unions and associations; but they take part as citizens in all elections, and with equal votes choose their own members for the soviets, wherever they happen to be stationed. They form their own cooperative societies, which elect their own committees of management, and belong to Centrosoyus, the apex of the whole movement. They are encouraged to keep up their correspondence with their relatives in the villages and cities from which they have been drawn; and even to act as local correspondents to the newspapers. They not only remain citizens whilst serving in the ranks; they become even influential citizens. The peasant who is serving in the army can always command a hearing. Many are the instances in which a son who is a “Red Army man” (the word soldier is not used) has been able, by intervening from a distance, to obtain redress for his father and family who have been suffering from some petty tyranny or injustice at the hands of a local official.

The Red Army is, like all Continental forces, recruited by compulsory service. It is strictly confined to the offspring of “workers and peasants”, no child of the former nobility or *bourgeoisie* being admitted. Service (for the infantry) is for two years, for the air force three years, and for the navy five years. Only about one-third of those eligible to serve and sound in health are taken for the Red Army.² What is unusual is to find

¹ Apart from the abundant Russian material, the most accessible information as to the Red Army will be found in the *Military Year-book of the League of Nations*, 1932; and in the chapter entitled “The Army” in *The Great Offensive*, by Maurice Hindus, 1933, pp. 222-234; chap. i., “The Redarmyist”, in *Making Bolsheviks*, by S. N. Harper, 1931, pp. 132-152; *Eastward from Paris*, by Edouard Herriot, 1934, pp. 228-234; and (for an earlier and more critical view) *La Révolution russe*, par Henri Rollin, Paris, 1931, vol. ii. pp. 133, 343, etc.

See also the anonymous pamphlets published in Paris, entitled *Le Soldat de l'armée rouge*, 1929; and *L'Armée rouge et La Flotte rouge*, the latter with preface by P. Vaillant-Couturier, 1932.

² All the rest are placed in a territorial militia, in which they retain their civil employments, but are called out for instructional service for a few weeks at a time. In the course of five years they will have served in this way for eight or ten months. When so called up, their civil situations are guaranteed to them; they continue all their social

the conscription not unpopular. This is partly due to the unique informative and propagandist methods of the recruiting department. Prior to each annual conscription a specially selected commander (the word officer is not used) visits the village and convenes a meeting of the young men, and such of their elders as choose to attend. He explains, not at all as a person of superior class or rank, but in an atmosphere of comradeship, the rôle of the Red Army, the conditions of service, the educational and other advantages provided, and the varied amenities of the life ; and then he invites questions, which are put by the score, and answered to the best of his ability, as between friends and equals. The result is that, in marked contrast with the practice in tsarist times, those on whom the lot falls mostly go, not only without reluctance or amid the tears of their families, but willingly. Many who are not conscripted actually volunteer for service. They find the army conditions, in fact, superior to those of the independent peasant or the miner, the factory operative or the worker on the oil-field. The commanders, and even those whom we should call non-commissioned officers, treat the Red Army man with respect. All ranks, address each other as equals. In the field, as at drill, or on manoeuvres, prompt obedience to orders is enforced, discipline is strict, and some formality is observed. But off duty all ranks meet together on equal terms, sit next to each other at places of amusement, travel together, and even play games and engage in amateur theatricals together ; the wives of the commanders often playing parts along with members of the rank and file ! To the Red Army man his commander is merely a man of special knowledge, who, when all are on duty, has the function of leader, just as the manager of a factory has in the industrial field.

Probably such an army could achieve no military efficiency unless all ranks were educated. Accordingly, in the Soviet Union, as much care is taken in the appropriate education of the rank and file as in the specialised training of the commanders. At every military centre there are club-houses, school-rooms, lecture courses, libraries, theatre and cinemas. The aggregate number of volumes now included in the thousands of libraries of the defence forces is reported to be somewhere about twenty millions. If any men still join as illiterates, they are promptly taught to read and write both their own vernacular and Russian. All are put through an educational course lasting throughout their whole service, in which not only geography and history, but also economics and " political grammar " (naturally Marxian), are imparted by instructors trained to be both simple and interesting in their expositions. All men are taught to sing, and, as many as desire it, to play one or other musical instrument. There are a number of special newspapers for the defence forces with an aggregate circulation of a quarter of a million. The men have also a quite exceptional amount of vocational training, for which the modern mechanised army

insurance benefits, whilst they receive two-thirds of the wage they have been earning. Up to the age of 24, all are in the first reserve ; from 24 to 40 in the second reserve, to be called up only in the greatest emergencies.

offers abundant opportunity. Moreover, as this under Soviet Communism offends no private interest, the troops are continually being called out to help, not only in the agricultural operations of the locality, but also in all sorts of industrial work in which extra labour force is urgently needed, to avert a breakdown or prevent injurious delay, whether in such operations of civil engineering as roads and bridges, railways and embankments, or in repairing buildings, restoring telegraphic communications, or mending machines of every kind. Incidentally it may be said that considerable attention is paid by the Communist Party to the promotion, among all the recruits, of the orthodox Marxian faith. There are one or more cells of the Party in every military unit or barrack, as well as one or more groups of the League of Youth (Comsomols), to the number, in the aggregate, of more than 10,000.¹

Every year nearly half a million Red Army men, who have completed two or more years of this training, return to their homes and resume their civil occupations. As there are some 600,000 villages, hamlets and cities in the USSR, this means that, during the past decade, an average of three or four such men have re-entered each village and hamlet between the Baltic and the Pacific; about forty to the area of each selosoviet. These young men in the early twenties, relatively well informed and widely read, trained to good habits and filled with a sense of order and efficiency, easily become presidents of many of the 70,000 village soviets; delegates to congresses and conferences; managers of cooperative societies or collective farms; and in various ways influential leaders of the local community. In another decade their number in each village will have been doubled. It is, we think, impossible to over-estimate the importance of this continuous impregnation of what used to be the "deaf" villages of the remote steppe or the Siberian forest, alike in the promotion of national unity, in the stimulation of rural thought, and in the universal penetration of the communist faith.

The Commissariat of Foreign Affairs

The Commissariat of Foreign Affairs (Narkomindel), which has been presided over successively by Trotsky (1917-1918), Chicherin (1918-

¹ These cells are busy "coordinating the activity of the 120,000 communists (that is, Party members) in the official total of 562,000 Red Army-ists; a total now raised to nearly a million. The Communist League of Youth has an even larger representation, numbering 150,000. In the senior commanding personnel, and among the 'political workers' in the Red Army, the percentage . . . is even higher. Every year several tens of thousands of new Party members are recruited from the Red Army-ists in active service" (*Making Bolsheviks*, by S. N. Harper, 1931, p. 135). In 1934 the proportion of Party members was placed as high as 60 per cent (*Eastward from Paris*, by Edouard Herriot, 1934, p. 231). Such a figure, however, applies more correctly to the officer corps. Among regimental commanders the proportion of Party members in 1935 reached 72 per cent, among division commanders, 90 per cent, and among corps commanders, 100 per cent. Among the rank and file, 49.3 per cent were members of the Party or Comsomols (Speech by Tukhachevski, Assistant People's Commissar of Defence, at Seventh All-Union Congress, *Moscow Daily News*, February 2, 1935).

1930), and, since 1930, by Litvinov, who had long been assistant to Chicherin, has gradually become an extensive and elaborately organised department, at least as well equipped for negotiations and for the orderly maintenance of international relations as the corresponding departments of other governments.¹ The People's Commissar has still two assistants or deputy commissars, but was, in 1934, relieved of his collegium. Besides the usual branches for the protocol, for archives, for the press, for the staff of diplomatic couriers, and for the consular service (in 1934 stationed at eighty-six foreign cities) there is a legal department and an economic department, both of which have manifested their competence. Continuous relations are maintained with the score of representatives or diplomatic agents in the chief cities of the USSR. In constant communication with the thirty soviet embassies or legations abroad,² there are five separate departments dealing with the relations with particular governments. Three of these departments manage the intercourse with the western world; the first taking Poland and the Baltic and Scandinavian states; the second Germany, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Hungary, Roumania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Greece; and the third the United Kingdom and all its dependencies, France, Italy, Spain, the United States and South America. Two departments tackle the eastern world; the first dealing with Turkey, Arabia, Yemen, Persia and Afghanistan; and the second with Japan, China and Mongolia.

The Commissariat of Internal Affairs

In 1934 a new All-Union People's Commissar for Internal Affairs (Narkomvnutdel) was appointed (the office being revived from its former existence in the RSFSR down to 1922), principally to take over the functions that have, during the past dozen years, developed upon the Ogpu, which had always been a federal department. This development had long been in contemplation. As long ago as January 1931, so a leading

¹ With the gradual resumption of diplomatic relations with other governments, the necessity was felt of a systematic analysis of the position of the USSR as a socialist island in a capitalist ocean. This was worked out in two treatises (in Russian), the first named translated into German, namely, *International Law in the Transition Period, as the Basis for the International Relations of the Soviet Union* (1929), by E. A. Korovin, professor of the University of Moscow; and *The Law as to Ambassadors and Consuls in the Soviet Union* (1930), by Professor A. Sabanin, head of the Legal Section of Narkomindel. See *Le Caractère et la situation internationale de l'Union des Soviets*, by Professor Otto Hoetzsch, 1932, pp. 46, 49, 103; *Die völkerrechtliche Anerkennung Sowjetrusslands*, by Peter Kleist, Berlin, 1934; and *The Soviet Union and International Law*, by T. A. Taracougio, New York, 1935.

Since 1927 there has been an *Annuaire Diplomatique* issued by the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs (Narkomindel) at Moscow, giving a mass of particulars likely to be useful to the diplomatic circle. A useful account of Narkomindel will be found in *The Soviet State*, by B. W. Maxwell, 1934, pp. 120-121.

² It may be added that the USSR is now (1935) recognised *de jure* by all the governments of Europe (except Switzerland, Holland, Portugal and Yugoslavia), and by all those of Asia (except Iraq and Siam), as well as by that of the United States. Of the states of Central and South America, only Uruguay has yet (1935) entered into formal relations with the USSR.

Ukrainian exile complains, "Moscow suppressed the commissariats of Internal Affairs in all the Union republics, alleging that 'in the circumstances of the socialist reconstruction of national economy these commissariats had become superfluous ballast in the soviet apparatus'". The duties of the liquidated commissariats were entrusted partly to newly created "chief offices of communal economy" and partly to the "Central Executive Committees of the separate Union republics, their Councils of (People's) Commissaries, and the commissariats of labour and justice".¹ The completion of this process was delayed until it was convenient, after the death of Menzhinsky, its president, in April 1934, to suppress also the separate existence of the Ogpu. By decree of July 11, 1934, the long-expected All-Union Commissariat for Internal Affairs (Narkomvnutdel) was established, with functions stated to be "the guarantee of revolutionary order and state security, the protection of socialist property, the registration of civil acts (births, deaths, marriages, divorces), and the protection of the frontiers". The new commissariat consists of six principal departments, namely "the Chief Department of State Security, the Chief Department of Workers' and Peasants' Militia, the Chief Department of Frontier and Internal Protection, the Chief Department of Corrective Labour Camps and Labour Settlements, the Department of Civil Acts, and that of Administrative Business".²

It is difficult, without further experience of the actual working of the new commissariat, to appreciate, with any accuracy, the extent and nature of the constitutional change that has been effected. We may, however, note, at once, an increasing centralisation of authority and administration. The constituent and autonomous republics, together with the municipalities and the other local authorities, hand over to the USSR People's Commissar what had hitherto been their sole control and administration of the "militia"³—that is to say what in western Europe and the United States is called the local constabulary or police force. The control of the local constabulary has now to be shared between the city soviet and the new central authority. The same may be said of the registration of births, deaths, marriages and divorces, which now becomes a function of the USSR Commissariat of Internal Affairs, though the local soviet retains a share in the administration.

The Ogpu

The supersession of the Ogpu, which has hitherto been directly responsible to the USSR Central Executive Committee (TSIK); and the

¹ "Ukrainia under Bolshevik Rule", by Isaac Mazepa, in *Slavonic Review*, January 1934, p. 341.

² For the decree of July 10, 1934, see *Pravda*, July 11, 1932; and *Russian Economic Notes of the United States Department of Commerce*, August 30, 1934.

³ This was foreshadowed in 1933 when, on the institution of permits of residence (called passports) in Moscow and some other cities, the issue of those permits was entrusted to the militia, who were placed under the direction of the Ogpu for this purpose.

assumption of its functions by the new USSR People's Commissar of Internal Affairs, is not a case of increased centralisation. There may well be administrative advantages in placing, in separate branches of the commissariat, equal in independent status, such distinct functions as "guaranteeing revolutionary order and state security" on the one hand, and, on the other, the control of the local constabulary forces in the several localities, the frontier guards, and "the corrective labour camps and labour settlements", all of which the Ogpu submerged in a single, secret administration. But apparently the principal change involved in the absorption of the Ogpu in the new commissariat is the splitting off of its strictly judicial functions, which are to be transferred, in accordance with the legal requirements, to the competent judicial organs to which all the cases investigated by the new commissariat in any of its sections are to be sent for trial and judgment. Cases under the "Department of State Security" (the former Ogpu) are to be directed to the Supreme Court of the USSR; whilst all cases of high treason and "espionage" will go to the military collegium of the Supreme Court, or to the competent military tribunals. That a substantial transfer of work on these lines is contemplated may be inferred from the published intention to increase the judicial staffs of the Supreme Court of the USSR, the supreme courts of the constituent and autonomous republics, the provincial and regional courts and the military tribunals.

On the other hand, it is apparently not intended completely to separate administrative from judicial proceedings. A "Special Conference" is to be organised under the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs, which, on the basis of definite regulations, is to be empowered to apply, by administrative order, such decisions (which will apparently not be called judicial sentences) as banishment from or to particular localities within the USSR, or exile beyond its frontiers, or detention in corrective labour camps for a period not exceeding five years. It is to be feared that this provision will cause critics to declare that it is only the name of the Ogpu that has been changed! It will be fairer to await experience of the action taken under the new decree.

The Supreme Court of the USSR

We have still to deal with what is, from one standpoint, the most important branch of the federal power, namely the Supreme Court of the USSR, together with the powerful department of the Procurator. This should involve a complete survey of the system of law and justice under Soviet Communism (for which we have no competence) and an examination of the conception of prisons for ordinary criminals as institutions not punitive but exclusively reformatory. We shall recur to the activities of the Ogpu in Part II. of this book, and we must content ourselves here with a brief account of the judicial structure from the federal angle.¹

¹ An excellent summary description will be found in "The Russian Legal System" by D. N. Pritt, K.C., in *Twelve Studies in Soviet Russia*, edited by M. I. Cole, 1933, pp

The administration of justice, like the prevention of crime and the maintenance of prisons, is, in the constitution of Soviet Communism, not one of the subjects assigned to the federal government. There is, accordingly, in each of the nine constituent republics (including the three united in the Transcaucasian Federation), a People's Commissar for Justice, with a system of courts, police and prisons under his direction; a Procurator with an extensive staff; and also a corresponding department, with that or some equivalent designation, in each of the autonomous republics and autonomous areas, great or small. But among the authorities appointed by and directly responsible to the Central Executive Committee (TSIK) of the USSR is the Supreme Court, which has jurisdiction over the whole territory. This USSR Supreme Court "has power to review by way of supervision . . . the judgments of the Supreme Courts of the seven [nine] constituent republics; it has original jurisdiction (which it has never yet been called upon to exercise) over disputes between constituent republics; and it exercises criminal jurisdiction in rare cases involving either persons of high position or charges of exceptional importance; by its military department it also exercises original jurisdiction over military officers of high rank, or exceptionally important charges against military defendants, as well as cassational jurisdiction over the decisions of the military courts. The Supreme Court has, strictly speaking, no other judicial functions; but the plenum [that is to say, the general meeting] of the court, consisting of the president, the deputy president, the three departmental presidents, four of the ordinary judges of the court selected for the purpose, and the president of the supreme court of each of the constituent republics [these not being members of the Supreme Court, but making the so-called plenum up to 18] issues explanations and interpretations of law and of legislation, and exercises certain limited powers of review both over the acts and decrees of the central executive committees (the ostensible seats of direct executive and legislative power) of the constituent republics, and over the decisions of their supreme courts".¹

145-176; see also Mr. Pritt's article "The Spirit of a Soviet Court", in *The New Clarion*, December 24, 1932. A later account is *Justice in Soviet Russia*, by Harold J. Laski, 1935, 40 pp. The subject is dealt with in greater detail in *Soviet Administration of Criminal Law*, by Judah Zelitch, of the Philadelphia Bar (Pennsylvania University Press, 1931, 418 pp.). The civil law will be found (in French) in *Les Codes de la Russie soviétique*, by J. Patouillet and Raoul Dufour, 3 vols., 1923-1928 (Bibliothèque de l'Institut du droit comparé de Lyon); or (in German) in *Das Zivilrecht Sowjetrusslands*, by Heinrich Freund, Berlin, 1924, or *Das Recht Sowjetrusslands*, by N. Timaschew, N. Alexejew and A. Sawadsky (Tübingen, 1925). These valuable codes do not yet seem to have engaged the serious attention of British lawyers, but we have heard them spoken of by Continental jurists with admiration.

As is so often the case in Soviet Communism the law and the courts of justice in the USSR ignore the classifications and the categories of the rest of Europe. There is no distinction between civil and criminal courts, and very little between the procedure in civil and criminal actions.

A convenient summary of the history of the Russian law prior to the revolution will be found prefixed to vol. i. of *Les Codes de la Russie soviétique*, by J. Patouillet and Raoul Dufour (1923).

¹ "The Russian Legal System", by D. N. Pritt, K.C., in *Twelve Studies in Soviet Russia*, edited by M. I. Cole, 1933, p. 148.

The judges of the Supreme Court, as of all other courts in the USSR, are, like those in other countries of continental Europe, not appointed from the professional advocates, as they are in Great Britain. So far as they are "whole time", and, so to speak, permanent, they are, as in other European countries, professionally qualified members of what we should call the Civil Service. Almost every court of first instance in the USSR consists of one permanent judge, appointed from year to year at a fixed salary about equivalent to that of the earnings of a highly paid skilled mechanic; and two co-judges (*narodnye zasedateli*, literally people's co-sitters), drawn for about a week at a time from a panel of persons, mostly manual-working men or women, normally in industrial employment, but carefully instructed in their judicial duties; and compensated merely for their loss of earnings during the week in which they sit. Although in theory these co-judges possess equal rights with the permanent judge, and can therefore outvote him on the bench, they serve, in practice, very much the same purposes as a British jury.¹

Now it is interesting to find that the same principle is adopted in the constitution of the Supreme Court of the USSR. The permanent judges, including the presidents, deputy president and thirty others, as members of this Court (and likewise the judges of the military courts), are appointed directly by the presidium of the Central Executive Committee (TSIK) from among persons possessing the electoral franchise and qualified by their legal attainments, and by previous service in the judicial hierarchy for a prescribed minimum period. But they do not sit alone. In every court of three, even for cases of the greatest importance, one member (the people's co-sitter) is a layman, although this co-judge is, for the USSR Supreme Court (as for the RSFSR Supreme Court) taken from a special panel of forty-eight co-judges, approved by the presidium of the Central Executive Committee. The Supreme Court of the USSR sits whenever required, normally in public (though with power to hold sessions *in camera* if the court thinks necessary); and not always in Moscow, but in special sessions wherever may be thought convenient.

¹ A cassational court, practically corresponding with our court of appeal, consists only of three permanent judges.

It is explained by Mr. Pritt that "cassation is the quashing or setting aside for some informality or irregularity, as opposed to appeal, which is, in theory, a rehearing. In Russia there is technically no appeal; but the grounds of cassation are so wide, both in definition and in practical application, that the distinction is immaterial" (*ibid.* p. 148). . . . "Side by side with the provision as to cassation, there exists a somewhat remarkable power in the courts to reverse or modify erroneous decisions of lower courts through 'review by way of supervision'. At any stage of a case, however early or however late (even after cassation is barred by lapse of time, and when a case has long been finally concluded in the inferior court), the president or the procurator of a court may call upon any inferior court to produce the record of any case, and they examine the whole proceedings, and if necessary set aside the decision itself or any preliminary step or decision. . . . The procedure is constantly invoked, and leads directly to the correction of wrong verdicts, and indirectly, no doubt, to much greater efficiency and vigilance" (*ibid.* p. 153).

The Procurator

Side by side with the Supreme Court in each of the constituent republics of the USSR, is a department which is unfamiliar to the Englishman, namely that of the Procurator. The Procurator, who is, in every continental country, one of the principal officers of the Minister of Justice (in the RSFSR he is the Deputy People's Commissar), is all that we mean by Public Prosecutor, together with much of what we mean by Attorney-General, and a great deal more besides. In the RSFSR, and in the other constituent republics, where both he and his deputy are appointed by the presidium of the Central Executive Committee, he has "the general duty of supervising in the public interest the operation of all government organs, in the widest sense of the phrase; and to enable him to fulfil this duty he is placed in a position of virtual independence of all departments",¹ though always in general subordination to the People's Commissar for Justice. He is responsible (as no official in England is) for the state of the law, with the positive duty of suggesting to the Sovnarkom or the Central Executive Committee any new legislation that is required, or any repeal or amendment of existing laws. He is supposed to keep a continuous watch (which no one in England is charged to do) on the activities of all judges, investigating officers, advocates, the local police and others connected with the administration of justice; and to institute proceedings against them, either administrative or disciplinary or criminal, whenever required.² He may intervene in civil actions when he thinks necessary, in order "to safeguard the interests of the state and of the toiling masses". But the largest part of the work of the extensive department of the Procurator is concerned with the investigation, in preparation for possible criminal proceedings, of deaths or physical casualties, damage or destruction of property, and mere pecuniary loss, so far as concerns any cases in which it is alleged or suspected that there has been a serious breach of the criminal law. The judicial systems of all civilised countries make more or less systematic provision for investiga-

¹ "The Russian Legal System", by D. N. Pritt, K.C., in *Twelve Studies in Soviet Russia*, edited by M. I. Cole, 1933, p. 160.

² "It is not an uninteresting feature of the Procurator's duties that he is particularly active in connection with prison administration. He has to see that sentences are properly carried out, that any persons unlawfully detained are released, and that prisons are properly managed. He visits prisons regularly, generally as often as once in six days, and receives and investigates complaints by individual prisoners. The public are earnestly encouraged to take their complaints to his active and powerful organisation, and they are not slow to do so" (*ibid.* p. 160). Over a thousand such visits to prisons each month of the year were paid in 1923 and 1924 by the members of the Procurator's Department (*Soviet Administration of Criminal Law*, by Judah Zelitch, 1931, p. 124).

Incidentally, as we are informed, this continuous inspection of the prisons by the Procurator's department leads to a considerable number of discharges or remission of sentences. Each constituent or autonomous republic has an item in its budget for prison expenses, which it is loth to exceed. When the prisons get full, an excess on the year is threatened. As a practical expedient, the number of prisoners is then reduced by the Procurator recommending for immediate discharge a sufficient number of those whom he thinks most likely to be favourably affected by such leniency.

tions of this kind, partly in order to ensure that no criminal goes undetected and unprosecuted, and partly in order to sift out, from the mass of trivial causes of assault, petty larceny or contravention of bye-laws, those calling for more drastic treatment. The English system is exceptional in leaving this function in the main, partly to the local police forces, rarely specialised into a Criminal Investigation Department (in cases of death, also to the ancient coroner) and partly, if he can afford the expense, to the private person aggrieved, who may now, in serious cases, sometimes be able, by comparatively recent reforms, to enlist the services of the Treasury Solicitor or the Public Prosecutor, if not of the Attorney-General. In the constituent republics of the USSR, as in most other countries, this work is undertaken as a matter of course by the government, in an extensive department known as that of the "Procurator".¹ In all allegations or suspicions of certain classes of crime, and in any other case in which it is thought desirable, the Procurator's Department makes an investigation, in which every person supposed to be able to give relevant information, whether or not suspected of being the criminal, and including experts as well as witnesses, is interrogated in private by a qualified judicial officer, called in the USSR an inquisitor or investigator. At this stage, no person is accused (although a person strongly suspected may be detained in prison) and no one can legally be compelled to answer questions; whilst anyone may appeal, summarily and without expense, to the Procurator himself, against any sort of maltreatment at the hands of the investigator. The enquiries and interrogations are, in many cases, necessarily searching and prolonged (as we have lately learned about those in similar cases made by our English policemen). But there is reliable testimony, so far as the RSFSR is concerned, that efforts are made to bring out impartially the whole of the relevant facts, whether or not pointing to a crime having been committed, and whether for or against any suspected person. The idea seems to be that, if a crime has been committed, it ought to be "reconstructed" from the facts before a decision is come to that any particular person should be prosecuted as the probable criminal. When this "reconstruction" has been made, to the satisfaction of the Procurator, he decides whether the facts point to any particular person as the probable criminal, and if so, the case is then remitted to the court for trial. Only at this stage is the indictment, which for the first time specifies precisely the breach of the criminal law that is alleged to have been committed, drawn up and communicated to the defendant,

¹ The student will find this function of the USSR Procurator precisely described in minute detail in *Soviet Administration of Criminal Law*, by Judah Zelitch, 1931, chap. vi., "Proceedings prior to the Trial", pp. 153-196.

Until July 1933 the Procurator, and his extensive department, was exclusively a branch of the administration of justice of each constituent republic, the USSR itself having none. There has now been appointed a Procurator for the USSR, having all the wide powers and functions of the Procurator for the RSFSR. In addition, this new federal Procurator (Akulov) is charged with the "supervision. . . of the legality and regularity" of the activities of a most important federal department, the OGPU, to which we have already referred.

who can then obtain the assistance of an advocate and prepare his defence.

Whether this system of preliminary official investigation by searching interrogation in private—which prevails all over the European continent—is or is not more efficacious than the peculiar British arrangement in like cases, either in securing the conviction of criminals, or in protecting the innocent from annoyance or danger, we do not presume to judge.

The College of Advocates

It is instructive to notice the reasons assigned for the fact that the profession of advocacy plays a smaller part in the USSR than in other countries. "The simplicity", we are authoritatively told, "of the procedure; the greater thoroughness in criminal cases of the preparatory work done before the case comes to court; the absence of rules of evidence and of similar technicalities; the greater certainty of the law arising from the absence of a vast fungus of reported cases; the freedom from all the hindrances that excessive wealth, on one side or the other, can place in the way of justice—all tend to make it less essential to employ an advocate. Nevertheless advocates are frequently employed, and the organisation of the profession is interesting."¹

After passing through various vicissitudes during the first five years of the revolution, the legal profession in the USSR (which does not distinguish between solicitors and barristers, any more than between these and jurisconsults, notaries or conveyancers) is, by the Advocacy Law of 1922, organised as a College of Advocates.² Admission is open to anyone (not belonging to one of the "deprived" categories) who qualifies, either by two years' service in the soviet judiciary system in a grade not lower than that of an investigator, or by graduating at the Institute of Soviet Law, or even by studying at evening classes and passing an examination. Since 1926 the number of members has been restricted. On admission as a member of the College, he or she becomes available for consultation by anyone seeking legal advice, or for assignment to act for any litigant, in civil or criminal action. The applicant for advice or the litigant requiring advocacy is, if recognised as "poor", such as a non-working invalid or aged pensioner, charged no fee. Industrial workers, peasants, clerks and handicraftsmen may be charged a small sum, which may be made payable by instalments. Anyone pecuniarily better off pays a fee according to a fixed scale, dependent partly on the amount of service rendered and partly on the pecuniary position of the client. But these fees, whatever they may be, are taken by the College of Advocates.³ Its members receive

¹ "The Russian Legal System," by D. N. Pritt, K.C., in *Twelve Studies in Soviet Russia*, edited by M. I. Cole, 1933, p. 158.

² Law No. 36 of 1922, since slightly amended by the Judicature Laws of 1923, 1924 and 1926; *Soviet Administration of Criminal Law*, by Judah Zelitch, 1931, pp. 140-144.

³ Apparently anyone wishing to do so may agree with the advocate to pay him a special and additional fee.

fixed salaries, which are reported to vary according to their several abilities and to the amount of work required from them. Professional discipline is maintained by the College, or rather by its presidium which the members' meeting elects, always subject to appeal to the Provincial Court. In the USSR, advocates, as well as judges, are, at least in theory, liable to suspension, disqualification and even criminal prosecution, for any breach of professional duty, even if no more than neglect, by reason of which any litigant or other client suffers loss or injury. It is to be noted that most of the advocates, like most of the doctors and many of the authors, do not seek to become Party members. This is not, in most cases, because they are not communists in opinion and sympathy, but because there is a feeling that the demands of Party discipline might prove incompatible with full performance of their duty to their clients and their profession. Thus, it is said that 85 per cent of the members of the College of Advocates are non-Party. Although the contrary has been stated, without evidence, at least one competent observer reports that advocates are quite free to present the cases of their clients fearlessly and without smarting for their freedom.¹

The Problem of National Minorities

We have yet to add to our description of the pyramid of soviets, an account of how the Bolsheviks believe that they have solved the problem presented by the existence, in the vast territory for which a constitution had to be provided, of a hundred or more distinct nationalities. One of the difficult problems presented to political science by the geographical unity of the Eurasian plain has always been that of the extreme diversity of the population found upon it, in race, religion, language, degrees of civilisation and culture, habits of life, historical tradition and what not. The continuity of land surface from the Gulf of Finland to the Pacific Ocean prevented the rest of the world from recognising in the tsarist régime what was essentially a colonial empire, ruled from St. Petersburg by the upper class of a superior race—not without analogy to the colonial empire of Holland, ruling its East Indian dependencies from the Hague; or indeed to that of the Britain of the eighteenth century, ruling its heterogeneous colonies from Westminster. The systems of the Dutch and the British appealed to the Bolsheviks no more than those of the Spanish and the French. The compulsory "russification" aimed at by the Russian autocracy was not only manifestly impracticable, but also in the highest degree unpopular.

Lenin and his colleagues in the Social Democratic Party of Russia had not failed to notice, from the very beginning of the twentieth century, how strong and persistent was the popular discontent caused by the tsarist insistence on the "russification" of all the national minorities

¹ "One of the most eminent advocates, who had appeared for many persons accused of counter-revolutionary activities, stated that he never felt the least embarrassment or difficulty in presenting his case as strongly as he thought fit" ("The Russian Legal System", by D. N. Pritt, K.C., in *Twelve Studies in Soviet Russia*, edited by M. I. Cole, 1933, p. 159).

within the Empire.¹ Ignoring the indications in the Communist Manifesto of 1848, as to proletarian supremacy leading to the passing away of national differences, and resisting the growing feeling through Europe in favour of united nationalist states, Lenin insisted that the Bolsheviks should declare themselves in favour, along with the right of self-determination of even the smallest nationality, also of the concession of "cultural autonomy" to national minorities included within states. This proved to be an important factor, so far as the national minorities of Tsarist Russia were concerned, in securing their participation in the revolutions of February and October 1917.

How were the insistent demands of the various nationalities to be met? The Provisional Government had left this problem, along with so many others, to the prospective Constituent Assembly. But in October 1917 Lenin and his colleagues found themselves in power, before anyone had worked out any scheme of organisation that would satisfy the national minorities without endangering the strength and unity of the central authority. This did not prevent the new government from issuing a flamboyant proclamation promising autonomy in return for support.

"Mohammedans of Russia," it began, "Tartars of the Volga and Crimea; Kirghiz and Sartes of Siberia and Turkestan; Turks and Tartars of Transcaucasia, your beliefs and customs, your national institutions and culture, are hereafter free and inviolable. You have the right to them. Know that your rights, as well as those of all the peoples of Russia, are under the powerful protection of the Revolution, and of the organs of the soviets for workers, soldiers, and peasants. Lend your support to this revolution, and to its government."²

The working out of the problem of national minorities was entrusted to Stalin, who, as a member of one of the innumerable tribes inhabiting the Caucasian mountains, had long had a personal interest in the subject. In 1913, indeed, he had published a pamphlet in which he endeavoured to reconcile cultural autonomy with the supremacy of the whole proletarian mass.³ He was made People's Commissar for Nationalities, with the opportunity of concentrating his whole energy on the task.

Cultural Autonomy

It took Stalin four years to get his ideas even formally embodied in the constitution. He had first to secure the confidence of the national

¹ Already at the London Conference of 1903, Lenin got carried a resolution stating that "The Conference declares that it stands for the complete right of self-determination of all nations"; to which the Second Congress of the Party in August 1903 added the important words "included in any state". The Central Committee of the Party, at the meeting of September 25, 1913, emphasised the necessity of guaranteeing "the right to use freely their native language in social life and in the schools".

² *Soviet Rule in Russia*, by W. R. Batsell, 1929, p. 109. A French translation will be found in "Le Bolshevisme et l'Islam", by Castagne, in *Revue du monde musulman*, Paris, vol. xxxi, pp. 7-8.

³ *Marxism and the National Question*, by Josef Stalin, 1913 (in Russian).

minorities in European Russia, a task which was, in the turmoil of the civil war, for a long time impossible. "In its earlier years", it has been well said,¹ "the Commissariat of Nationalities was an agency for the propagation of the communist faith among the non-Russian peoples." It was, as well, "the arbiter of differences arising between autonomous states and the guardian of the interests of the national minorities, and was generally active in promoting cooperation among the several self-governing peoples. . . ." "As early as March 1918, Stalin signed a decree calling for the formation of a Tartar-Bashkir Republic. The civil war intervening, the measure remained a dead letter. The first ethnic group actually to achieve autonomy were the German settlers on the Volga, who, even under the old régime, had had certain privileges. They were organised in 1918 as a so-called 'Labour commune', which later became an autonomous republic. The establishment of the Bashkir State followed a year later. This was the first soviet state with an Oriental, that is, Turkish and Moslem, population. Upon soil once ruled by the khans of the Golden Horde the Tartar Republic was proclaimed in 1920. The Volga Tartars are the dominant nationality here, and the ancient city of Kazan is the administrative and cultural centre. About the same time the Karelian Republic was formed on the Finnish border, while the territories occupied by the Kalmyks, the Votyaks and the Mari were given the status of autonomous regions. Within the next two years the Crimean Republic came into being, the Komi people of the north was allotted a spacious region of its own, and the Chuvashian territory, now a republic, also became an autonomous region. Thus, by 1922 all the more important ethnic groups in the European part of the Russian federation had become masters of their own houses."²

In the Fundamental Law for the RSFSR, which was adopted on July 10, 1918, provision had been made for the possible combination or union of the soviets of "regions which are distinguished by a particular national and territorial character". It was even foreseen, by Article II., that these autonomous regional organs might "enter into the RSFSR on a federal basis". But none of them existed at the time, and (perhaps because they were at all times already inside the unitary state) none of them ever did "enter into the RSFSR on a federal basis".

Nevertheless the work done by Stalin, during his four years' tenure of office as People's Commissar for Nationalities, was of great and lasting importance. What he worked out in the vast domain of the RSFSR was not federalism (which came only in 1922-1923, when the nationalities outside the RSFSR joined with it in the federal USSR) but the concession of "cultural autonomy", coupled with an actual encouragement of the admission of members of the national minorities to the work of local administration. The autonomous republics and autonomous regions established within the RSFSR during the years 1918-1922 do not seem to

¹ *The Jews and other National Minorities under the Soviets*, by Avraham Yarmolinsky, 1928, pp. 131-133.

² *Ibid.*

have had in law any powers or duties, rights or functions differing essentially from those of the local authorities of the remainder of the territory of the RSFSR. They were, in practice, between 1918 and 1922, as they are to this day, dealt with by the central authorities at Moscow, *apart from matters of cultural autonomy*, almost exactly as if they were simply krais or oblasts. And when we realise that the most important of these enclaves had less than three millions of inhabitants; and that the aggregate population of the whole couple of dozen of them did not, at the time, exceed five millions; whilst the rest of the RSFSR had nearly a hundred millions, we shall not be inclined to take too seriously their several pretensions to federal status.

What the People's Commissar for Nationalities achieved between 1918 and 1922 was to stretch the provisions of Article II. of the Fundamental Law to cover the organisation of particular "regional unions of soviets" into what were called, in a dozen of the more important localised communities, "autonomous republics", and in another dozen cases "autonomous areas". Their regional congresses of soviets were recognised as having authority over all the soviets of the villages or cities or other districts within the territories assigned to these newly created "autonomous" parts of the RSFSR. Such of them as were called autonomous republics have even been allowed, in flat contradiction of the Fundamental Law,¹ to call their principal officials People's Commissars, and to group them into a sovnarkom, or Cabinet of Ministers. This harmless concession to regional pride was safeguarded by the express stipulation in the decree that, for all the "unified" narkomats or ministries² the appointment of People's Commissar was to be made only after consultation with the corresponding People's Commissar at Moscow. There was not even any concession of "cultural autonomy" explicitly embodied in the instruments constituting the new local authorities. It was, however, granted in administration. Stalin had sufficient influence with his ministerial colleagues, and with the Central Executive Committee, to induce them to refrain from using their powers of disallowance and cancellation in such a way as to interfere with the practical autonomy of these autonomous areas in purely cultural matters of local concern.

So far the important concession of cultural autonomy had involved little or no difference in political structure between the areas recognised as occupied by distinct nationalities and the other parts of the RSFSR organised in congresses of soviets for provinces (gubernia), counties (uezd) and rural districts (volost). The various minorities were, in fact, induced

¹ Article 48 declares that "the title of People's Commissar belongs exclusively to the members of the sovnarkom who administer the general affairs of the RSFSR, and cannot be adopted by any other representative of the central or local authorities" (Fundamental Law of July 10, 1918, Article II.; *Soviet Rule in Russia*, by W. R. Batsell, 1929, p. 88).

² The "unified" commissariats, narkomats or ministries comprise the more important of the departments under local administration (see p. 79), such as those of finance, food supplies and light industries, and (until 1934) also labour, and workers' and peasants' inspection. To these was added in 1934 the commissariat of agriculture dealing with the kolkhosi and the independent peasantry.

to adopt, in substance, the same constitutional structure as the rest of the RSFSR. What the concession of cultural autonomy amounted to between 1918 and 1922 was merely that the central authorities of the RSFSR did not, in practice, prevent those of each autonomous republic and autonomous area from adopting its own vernacular as the official language; or from using it in councils and courts of justice, in schools and colleges, and in the intercourse between government departments and the public. The local authorities could give preference to their own nationals as teachers and local officials, and were even encouraged to do so. Their religious services were not interfered with by the Central Government. They could establish theatres, and publish books and newspapers in their own tongues. These were exactly the matters in which local autonomy was most warmly desired.¹

A further stage in dealing with the problem of nationalities was marked by the reorganisation of Stalin's own Commissariat (Narkomat) by decrees of May 19 and December 16, 1920. There was then created (but merely as a part of Stalin's own ministerial department) a "soviet of nationalities" consisting of the presidents of delegations of the various autonomous republics and areas, who were to sit with five of Stalin's own nominees under his presidency. This body was merely to advise the minister in his duties, which were on the same occasion defined anew, without mention of federation, as "all measures guaranteeing the fraternal collaboration of all the nationalities and tribes of the Russian Soviet Republic". This taking directly into council the heads of the national minorities within the RSFSR was an act of statesmanship; but how far this "fraternal collaboration" was from federalism, or even genuine autonomy, may be seen from the fact that the People's Commissar for Nationalities was expressly empowered to appoint his own resident agent to the capital city of each autonomous region "to watch over the execution of the decrees of the federal central authority of the Russian Soviet Republic".

The Adoption of Federalism

The high constitutional importance of Stalin's work as People's Commissar of Nationalities was, however, not adequately realised until the

¹ The limits to this "cultural autonomy" should be noted. Apart from the highly important matter of local administration by the natives, it is mainly a matter of permitting the use of the vernacular for all activities that are lawful in the Soviet Union; not a new right to conduct any activities that may be alleged to have been part of the vernacular culture. Thus it must not be assumed that the Ukrainians, the Georgians or the Germans, in the autonomous areas of the USSR, were to be given unlimited freedom to maintain or enter into relations with persons of the same nationality outside the USSR, including *émigrés* or exiles. In the concession of cultural autonomy within the USSR loyalty to the régime of the country was presupposed. In short, cultural autonomy (as distinguished from native government) was a reversal of the tsarist policy, of "russification", and nothing more. "The Soviet Government," it has been said, "is not Russian, but proletarian: it does not seek to russify the peoples of the Union, but to train them as communists like the Russian people itself, partners in the building up of socialism" (*Nationalism in the Soviet State*, by Hans Kohn, 1934, p. 112).

time came in 1922 when steps could be taken for the federal union between the RSFSR on the one hand, and the Ukraine, White Russia and the Transcaucasian Federation on the other. Then, as we have described, the autonomous republics and autonomous areas which Stalin had established within the RSFSR were all accorded independent and equal representation, nominally upon the same basis as the incoming independent republics, and indeed, as the RSFSR itself, in the federal organ entitled the Soviet of Nationalities, which is one limb of the bicameral Central Executive Committee (TSIK) of the USSR.¹

It remains to be said that, during the dozen years since the formation of the Soviet Union in 1923, the position of nearly all these autonomous republics and autonomous areas has been largely transformed. It is not that there has been any important alteration in their political structure, or in their nominal relation to the central authorities of the constituent republics within which they are situated, or to those of the Soviet Union. Their position of cultural autonomy has, indeed, been strengthened not only by long enjoyment of their privileges, but also by the scrupulous care taken at Moscow always to treat the minority cultures with respect, even on occasions when counter-revolutionary aspirations of a nationalist character have had to be sternly repressed. This policy has not been maintained without an occasional struggle. From time to time it has been complained that the recognition of all these national minorities and their cultures was costly in money and detrimental to educational and administrative efficiency;² and, worst of all, that it was admittedly made use of occasionally as a cloak for "separatist" machinations. But the Communist Party declared against such "Pan-Russian chauvinism", as being even more subversive than "local nationalism".³

The number of autonomous republics and autonomous areas has been, in fact, from time to time increased. Even the Jews, who are dispersed all over the Union, have been encouraged and assisted to form locally autonomous groups, especially in Southern Ukraine and the Crimea, and have been formally granted an autonomous oblast (in due course to be promoted to an autonomous republic) at Biro-Bidjan in Eastern Siberia.

¹ The functions of the Commissariat of Nationalities included "(a) the study and execution of all measures guaranteeing the fraternal collaboration of the nationalities and tribes of the Russian Soviet Republic; (b) the study and execution of all measures necessary to guarantee the interests of national minorities on the territories of other nationalities of the Russian Soviet Federation; (c) the settlement of all litigious questions arising from the mixture of nationalities" (Decree No. 45 of May 27, 1920; see also that of No. 99 of December 25, 1920; *Soviet Rule in Russia*, by W. R. Batsell, 1929, pp. 118-199).

² The State Bank, in 1925, issued a circular to its numerous branches forbidding their use of the various vernaculars in the books of account or in correspondence with Moscow or with each other. This attempt to "establish for itself a common language for its bureaucracy" was objected to by a delegate to the Third All-Union Congress of Soviets in 1925, who declared that "such projects should not be introduced" (Shorthand report of the Congress, p. 133; *Soviet Rule in Russia*, by W. R. Batsell, 1929, p. 649).

³ *Nationalism in the Soviet Union*, by Hans Kohn, 1934, pp. 103-107; see also *How the Soviet Government solves the National Question*, by L. Perchik (Cooperative Publishing Society of Foreign Workers in the USSR, Moscow, 1932, 68 pp.).

The Soviet Government has even begun to "settle" the gypsies, who swarm restlessly in the USSR as elsewhere.¹

It would be too much to expect the reader to examine, in detail, the varying developments of the twenty-seven autonomous republics and autonomous areas.² No fewer than twelve of the autonomous republics are within the RSFSR; and these autonomous republics alone extend to more than eight million square kilometres out of the total area of that constituent republic of less than twenty million kilometres, though including only sixteen and a half million inhabitants out of more than one hundred million.³

¹ "In Moscow there live 4000 members of this ancient and myterious race. In other countries they are left to themselves; the Soviet Government has formed a club among the few active elements in the gypsy youth; it is called in the gypsy language "Red Star". It has some 700 members, of whom until quite recently only about 5 per cent could read and write. It is active in the liquidation of illiteracy, arranges lectures, organises excursions to factories and museums, and issues the first wall-newspaper in the gypsy language. Alongside this cultural activity an attempt is being made at the economic reorganisation of gypsy life. The gypsies have been given land. Under the leadership of the Moscow club, 7000 gypsy families have been settled on holdings; workshops have been started; and an obstinate struggle has begun against the past life of the gypsies. In harmony with the efforts of the Soviet Government on behalf of national cultures, the popular gypsy songs and dances have been developed and freed from the elements which had been interpolated in them through performance in places of public entertainment. The first play staged by the club in the gypsy language dealt with the transition to a settled life" (*Nationalism in the Soviet Union*, by Hans Kohn, 1934, p. 130).

² Actually the first to be granted cultural autonomy as a region in 1918, and as a republic in 1923, with the right to give preference in filling local offices to its own nationals, was the Autonomous Socialist Soviet Republic of the Volga Germans, a settlement founded as long ago as 1764. This has now 631,300 inhabitants, mostly peasants, of whom two-thirds are German by extraction and language, one-fifth Russians and one-eighth Ukrainians. Fifteen years ago 15 per cent of the families owned 75 per cent of the land, more than three-quarters of the whole having to work as wage-labourers. The 15 per cent who had added field to field had a higher standard of farming and education, and more sustained industry and thrift, than their indigent neighbours; and they were long reluctant to cooperate in collective farms, to unite their scattered plots into fields permitting mechanisation, and to adopt methods of joint working which allowed the fuller use of an improved equipment. After pleading in vain to be let alone, or to be permitted to emigrate *en masse*, those who were not deported as recalcitrant kulaks (whose sufferings had in many cases been great) were eventually compelled to accept the kolkhos system, of which they have apparently made an economic success. There are now 361 kolkhosi, 431 sovkhosi, with 99 machine and tractor stations, and over 90,000 peasant householders. The republic, the area of which is now almost wholly collectivised in sovkhosi or kolkhosi, is divided into 12 rayons, in six of which the language in use is German; in two, German and Russian; in two, German and Ukrainian; and two others, German, Russian and Ukrainian. Whereas fifteen years ago there were said to be only some 200 volumes of books in the whole republic, there are now 82 libraries, 178 village reading-rooms and tens of thousands of volumes. The nationality law of the republic of the Volga Germans is described in two publications in German, which also give a valuable account, though not unbiassed, of the general nationality policy of the Soviet Government (Rudolf Schulze-Molkau, *Die Grundzüge des wolgadeutschen Staatswesens im Rahmen der russischen Nationalitätenpolitik*, Munich, 1931; and especially Manfred Langham Ratzenburg, *Die Wolgadeutschen, ihr Staats- und Verwaltungsrecht in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart, zugleich ein Beitrag zum bolschewistischen Nationalitätenrecht*, Berlin, 1929. And see, generally, *Nationalism in the Soviet Union*, by Hans Kohn, 1934, p. 125.)

³ The one autonomous republic in the Ukraine extends to only a small part of its total area; and those of the Transcaucasian Federation to no great proportion of its total area. White Russia contains no autonomous republics or areas. On the other hand, the

The Tartar Republic

We must content ourselves with a particular account of a single specimen, in its progress perhaps the most remarkable of all: the Tartar Autonomous Republic which the authors had the advantage of visiting in 1932. Twenty years ago its present area was an indistinguishable part of the vast gubernia or province of Kazan, with a poverty-stricken agricultural population almost entirely of Tartar race; 85 per cent illiterate; the women veiled; and the whole people completely debarred from self-government; and indeed, outside the city, left almost without administrative organs of any sort. There were a few dozen small elementary schools of the poorest kind, and only three places of higher education, in which but ten Tartar students, none of them the sons of peasants or wage-earners, were to be found. To-day there are over 1700 elementary schools, with more than 99 per cent of all the children of school age on the register, including girls equally with boys. The vernacular colleges and institutes of higher education are numbered by dozens, and filled with Tartar students, the great majority coming from peasant or wage-earning homes, whilst many more are to be found in colleges in other parts of the USSR. All the women are unveiled, and are taking their share in every department of public life. When the authors interviewed the Sovnarkom of People's Commissars (all of Tartar race) we found one of them a woman, who was Minister of Education. The health service for the village is an entirely new creation. Doctors (mostly women) and small hospitals (including lying-in accommodation), now cover the whole rural area, whilst at the capital, the city of Kazan, there are not only specialist central hospitals, but also a completely reorganised medical school, now filled mainly with Tartar students. More than two-thirds of the peasants have joined together in collective farms, which cover three-quarters of the entire cultivated area, and which, alike in 1932, 1933 and 1934, were among the first in the Union to complete their sowing, whilst they harvested more than 100 per cent of the planned yield. Fifteen years ago Tartar industry was practically non-existent; in the years 1931 and 1932 the planned industrial output was respectively 239 and 370 million roubles; and in each of the past three years the plan was more than fulfilled. The Tartar People's Commissar of Health, evidently a competent medical practitioner, explained how the crude death-rate for the republic as a whole had steadily declined year by year, whilst the infantile death-rate had been halved. There are, as we saw, still a few Mohammedan mosques functioning in Kazan, but the great majority of the population appear to have dropped Islam, almost as a spontaneous mass movement. There is a flourishing

three newest constituent republics (Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tadzhikistan) may be considered to be wholly composed of national minorities.

"The autonomous republics in the RSFSR have a total area of 8,054,855 square kilometres and a population of 16,782,047; without these republics, the RSFSR has an area of 11,693,441 square kilometres and a population of 84,075,538" (*Territorialnoe i administrativnoe delenie SSSR*, 17; *Soviet Rule in Russia*, by W. R. Batsell, 1929, p. 631).

state publishing house, which pours out a continuous stream of Tartar books and pamphlets, for which there is a large sale. There are Tartar theatres and cinemas, Tartar public libraries, and a well-frequented museum of Tartar antiquities and modern art products. In all sorts of way the Tartar autonomous republic demonstrates how proud of itself it has become !

The Jews in the USSR

We cannot omit to mention one important and peculiar minority, racial and religious rather than national, with which the Soviet Union has had to deal, namely that of the Jews. Under the tsars their oppression had been severe and unrelenting.¹ "When the autocratic régime fell, the crash reverberated in Jewish ears as though all the bells of freedom were ringing. With a stroke of the pen the Provisional Government abolished the complicated network of laws directed against the Jews. Suddenly their chains fell off. Disabilities and discriminations were cast on the refuse heap. . . . The Jews could straighten their backs and look to the future without fear."²

Unfortunately there were still to be undergone the three or four years of civil war and famine, during which, at the hand of the contending armies, the bulk of the Jewish population suffered the worst excesses. All that can be said is that, on the whole, the White Armies were the most brutal, whilst the Red Army did its best to protect these poor victims, notwithstanding the fact that, for one or other reason, the majority of the Jews were, for some time, not sympathetic to the Bolshevik Government. Its condemnation of profit-making trading, as of usury, bore harshly on the Jews of White Russia and the Ukraine, whose families had been for centuries excluded alike from agriculture and the professions, and confined to the towns of the Jewish Pale. In 1921 the New Economic Policy temporarily enabled many of them to resume their businesses ; but by 1928 the all-pervading collectivist enterprises of the trusts and the co-operative societies, aided by penal taxation and harsh measures of police,

had killed practically all the little profit-making ventures to which the Jewish families were specially addicted. The handicraftsmen were somewhat better off, and the younger ones, at least, could obtain employment in the government factories.

The Jewish problem, as it presented itself to the Soviet Government, was twofold. It was important to rescue from misery, and to find occupation for, the families of the ruined traders and shopkeepers of the small towns of White Russia and the Ukraine. Moreover, it was obviously desirable to secure the loyal allegiance to the Bolshevik régime of the whole three millions of Jews of the USSR. For the economic rehabilitation of the Jews—apart from those whose education and ability enabled them to obtain official appointments or entrance to the brain-working professions—the main resource was placed upon the establishment of Jewish agricultural settlements, at first in Southern Ukraine and the Crimea, and latterly in the extensive territory allocated for this purpose at Biro-Bidjan on the Amour River, in eastern Siberia. Largely by Government help with land and credit, assisted by a whole series of philanthropic associations promoted by the Jews of the United States (notably the Jewish Distribution Committee), as well as those of the USSR in the great voluntary Jewish Colonisation Society (OZET), something like forty thousand Jewish families, comprising a hundred and fifty thousand persons, have within the past fifteen years, been added to the agricultural population of the Soviet Union,¹ one-fourth of them in Biro-Bidjan, which has already been made an "autonomous region", ranking as an oblast, and will become a "Jewish autonomous republic" as soon as it obtains a sufficient population.²

To all the aggregations of Jews, although not recognised as a nation, the Soviet Government concedes the same measure and kind of cultural autonomy as it accords to the national minorities properly so called. "Jewish soviets exist wherever there is a considerable Jewish group. They have been formed in the Crimea as well as in White Russia. Here there are eighteen petty soviets, four of them rural. In the Ukraine . . . a minimum of 1000 Ukrainians or 500 non-Ukrainians is entitled to form a soviet. No less than 25,000 Ukrainians or 10,000 non-Ukrainians may elect a regional soviet. On April 1, 1927, there were 115 Jewish soviets

¹ This is at least twice as many as the number, mainly from Poland, settled on the land in Palestine during the same period.

² For a recent description of Biro-Bidjan—a territory half as large as England—traversed through its centre by the Trans-Siberian Railway; practically vacant of indigenous inhabitants; well-adapted to agricultural settlement, and apparently amply supplied with mineral resources as yet unworked—see Lord Marley's article in *Soviet Culture* for March 1934. "In order to encourage settlers, the Soviet Government has offered free transport, free housing and free land to suitable Jewish families in good health and trained in agriculture, or in one of the professions or industries available in the new republic, who are willing and desirous of settling in Biro-Bidjan, and would be willing to participate in the normal communal life of that area" (*ibid.* p. 5). There are already nearly a hundred primary schools, some fifty collective farms, seventeen small hospitals, and about fifty medical practitioners or assistants, for a total population of about 50,000, largely Jewish where not indigenous.

of the lowest category, both rural and semi-urban, and one Jewish regional soviet in the Kherson district. The seat of the latter is in the old colony of Seidemenukka, now renamed Kalinindorf for the president of the Union. It was convened for the first time on March 22, 1927, and the session was the occasion of much rejoicing. . . . The area of the rayon is 57,636 dessiatines, 27,000 of which are occupied by Jewish settlers ; and the population of 18,000 includes some 16,000 Jews, all farmers. Delegates to this regional soviet come from seven rural soviets, six of which are Jewish. . . . There is a Jewish police commissioner, with a force of three men at his command, not to mention a ramshackle two-roomed jail. . . . It is expected that more such soviets will come into existence in the near future in the districts of Krivoi-Rog, Zaporozhie and Mariupol. . . . In the Jewish soviets practically all the transactions, both oral and written, are in Yiddish ; it is the language of the sessions, of all instruments and of the correspondence. . . . There are also a number of lower courts (36 in the Ukraine and 5 in White Russia) where the business is conducted entirely in Yiddish. . . . Yiddish is, of course, the language in which Jewish children get their schooling, and is also employed in a number of Jewish homes, where Jewish children are cared for. . . . Of the Jewish population . . . a little over ten per cent in the Ukraine elects its own soviets.”¹

The policy of the Soviet Union with regard to its Jewish population has not been universally approved by the leaders of that community throughout the world. The condition of thousands of Jewish families in White Russia and the Ukraine is still one of poverty, relieved only by the alms of their co-religionists. The old people cannot make a new life for themselves. But they suffer, not as Jews but as shopkeepers and money-lenders, whose occupation has become unlawful. They are protected from violence as never before. They retain their synagogues and their vernacular speech. Their sons and daughters find all branches of education, and all careers, open to them. Many thousands of families have been assisted to settlement on the land. Wherever there is a group of Jewish families together they have their own local government and their cultural autonomy. They are not prevented from maintaining their racial customs and ceremonies. But all this falls far short of the ideals cherished by so many of the Jews in the USSR as elsewhere. “The Jewish Soviet Republic”, it has been said,¹ “envisaged by the orthodox communists, differs fundamentally from Herzl’s polity in Zion, as well as from the Territorialists’ Homeland. It is not intended to furnish the Jewish race throughout the world with the political life that it has lacked for so long. Nor is it intended to become the seat of the putative civilisation of the race. . . . For the present, the state extends to the Jewish masses what it offers to the other minorities : government institutions using their own language, and instruction entirely in their own tongue. In spite of the

¹ *The Jews and other National Minorities under the Soviets*, by Avrahm Yarmolinsky, New York, 1928, pp. 105-106.

fact that everything relating to religion is excluded from the schools, the children who pass through them are imbued with the Jewish spirit. The racial experience is transmitted to them through the medium of the Yiddish writers on whose works they are brought up ; and whose language they use, not only in the home but also in the classroom."

Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that all the blessings of security from pogroms and freedom to enter professions that the USSR accords to the Jews involve, in practice, their acceptance of the soviet régime ; and make, on the whole, for assimilation. The policy of the Soviet Union accordingly meets with persistent opposition, and even denigration, from the world-wide organisation of the Zionists, among whom the building up of the " national home " in Palestine brooks no rival.

The Solution of the Problem

It is, we think, owing to the whole-hearted adoption of this policy of cultural autonomy, and even more to its accompaniment of leaving the local administration to be carried on mainly by " natives ", that the Soviet Union, alone among the countries of eastern Europe, can claim, with a high degree of accuracy, that it has solved the difficult problem presented by the existence of national minorities within a strongly centralised state.¹ It has found this solution, not, as France has done, along the road of absorbing the national minorities by the creation of an overpowering unity of civilisation from end to end of its territory ; nor, as Tsarist Russia sought in vain to do, along that of forcibly suppressing all other national peculiarities in favour of those of the dominant race ; but by the novel device of *dissociating statehood from both nationality and race*. In spite of the numerical dominance of the Russian race in the USSR, and its undoubted cultural pre-eminence, the idea of there being a Russian state has been definitely abandoned. The very word " Russia " was, in 1922-1923, deliberately removed from the title of the Soviet Union. All sections of the community—apart from those legally deprived of citizenship on grounds unconnected with either race or nationality—enjoy, throughout the USSR, according to law, equal rights and duties, equal privileges and equal opportunities. Nor is this merely a formal equality under the law and the federal constitution. Nowhere in the world do habit and custom and public opinion approach nearer to a like equality in fact. Over the whole area between the Arctic Ocean and the Black Sea and the Central Asian mountains, containing vastly differing races and nationalities, men and women, irrespective of conformation of skull or pigmentation of skin, even including the occasional African negro admitted from the United States, may associate freely with whom they please ; travel in the same public vehicles and frequent the same restaurants and hotels ; sit next to each other in the same colleges and places of amusement ; marry wherever

¹ See, for the whole problem, *National States and National Minorities*, by W. C. Macartney, 1934.

there is mutual liking ; engage on equal terms in any craft or profession for which they are qualified ; join the same churches or other societies ; pay the same taxes and be elected or appointed to any office or position without exception. Above all, these men and women denizens of the USSR, to whatever race or nationality they belong, can and do participate—it is even said that the smaller nationalities do so in more than their due proportion—in the highest offices of government and in the organised vocation of leadership ; alike in the sovnarkoms and central executive committees of the several constituent republics and in those of the USSR, and, most important of all, in the Central Committee of the Communist Party (and its presidium), and even in the all-powerful Politbureau itself. The Bolsheviks have thus some justification for their challenging question : Of what other area containing an analogous diversity of races and nationalities can a similar assertion be made ?

The policy of cultural autonomy and native self-government is, indeed, carried very far. It is not confined to the more powerful national minorities, nor even to groups of magnitude. Wherever a sufficient minimum of persons of a particular race or culture are settled together, the local administration allows for their peculiar needs.¹ Hardly any of the distinct races or cultures, not even the Russians who count so large a majority, are without their local minorities, dwelling amid alien local majorities. On the other hand, some of the races are wholly dispersed, and are to be found everywhere. Hence the autonomy has to be, and is, carried so far

¹ " There is scarcely a people in the Soviet Union which has no members who form a minority in one, or very often in many member states or regions. The Soviet Union has accordingly enacted very elaborate minority legislation, assuring to the minorities their schools and the employment of their mother tongue ; wherever minorities live together in villages or districts they have been brought together in administrative units in which their language and their national characteristics have full play " (*Nationalism in the Soviet Union*, by Hans Kohn, 1934, pp. 69-70).

" The lower steps in the ladder of soviet national (minority) political organisation are the ten national (minority) circuits (or oblasts), 147 national (minority) rayons, and about 3200 national (minority) soviets (in village or city). These units represent small national (minority) groups in the midst of larger units that are permitted to develop their own national (minority) cultural life. In fairness to the soviets, it must be said that the national minorities are given every opportunity to develop their cultural interests " (*The Soviet State*, by B. W. Maxwell, 1934, p. 26).

" For example, in the RSFSR there are ten national districts, 147 national regions and 3200 national village soviets. In the Ukrainian SSR, among the 380 regions, there are 25 national regions : 8 Russian, 7 German, 3 Bulgarian, 3 Greek, 3 Jewish and 1 Polish. Among the great number of national village soviets of the Ukrainian SSR there are 16 Moldavian, 10 Czech, 4 White Russian and even 1 Swedish and 1 French. In the Abkhazian SSR there is even a negro soviet " (*How the Soviet Government solves the National Question*, by L. Perchik, Moscow, 1932, p. 27). It is currently asserted in 1935 that there are in the USSR, 5000 national soviets.

The existence of a negro village, with a soviet of its own race, is, we imagine, unique in Europe. Persons of African descent, though relatively few in number in the USSR, are more than is usually supposed. Besides the scattered workmen in many occupations who have drifted in from the United States, and a small number of highly educated negro specialists who have been engaged to assist in cotton-growing, etc., there are, about the shores of the Black Sea, quite a number of descendants of the African slaves whom the wealthy used to buy in the slave market of Constantinople. It will be remembered that Pushkin, the first great Russian poet, was of negro descent.

as to secure, for even the smallest minority group, its own autonomy, as regards primary school and local officials, even against the dominant minority culture.

The Maintenance of Unity

Yet the state as a whole maintains its unity unimpaired, and has even, like other federal states, increased its centralisation of authority. It is only in the USSR that this centralisation involves no lessening of the cultural autonomy of the minorities, and even occurs concomitantly with the strengthening of the various regional cultures. This unbroken unity, and this increasing centralisation of authority, is ensured in ways that will become plain as our exposition proceeds. It will suffice for the present to note, first, that, legally and formally, the powers of the superior authorities in disallowance and cancellation, are the same over the autonomous republics and autonomous areas as over other oblasts, rayons, cities and villages; the cultural autonomy, though formally established in principle by general law, being essentially a matter of administrative practice. Next, the great levelling influence of the economic relations exemplified in widespread industrialisation and collectivism, which operate irrespective of race or nationality, or any geographical boundaries, constitute a silent but continuous unifying factor. Finally, the ubiquitous guidance and persuasion of the essentially unitary Communist Party, composed of members of every race and every distinctive culture in the USSR, ensures not only unity but also all the centralisation that is necessary.

Alongside this maintenance and strengthening of the minority cultures, there has been an unmistakable rise in the level of civilisation. Note first, and perhaps as most important, a marked increase, among the national minorities, of their own self-respect. It is, indeed, the many backward populations, which had suffered so much under tsarist repression that they had nothing that could be destroyed, which have gained most from the nationalities policy of the Soviet Government. They have, to a considerable extent, already lost their "inferiority complex", and gained in confidence and courage. The women, in becoming literate, have become effectually free, alike from the veil and from the control of husband or father. The children have been almost universally got to school, and have been provided with technical institutes and colleges of university rank, using the vernacular. The health of the whole people has been improved. With hospitals and medical services, epidemics have been got under, and the death-rate has everywhere been greatly reduced. All this has been carried out by the local administration, largely in the hands of "natives", but with the constant guidance of the various commissariats of health and education, and of the Communist Party, with abundant encouragement and financial assistance from Moscow, always under conditions of "cultural autonomy". Even more influential in change has been the economic development. The nomadic tribes have, to a great extent, become settled agriculturists, grouped in collective farms; the

peasants have been helped to new crops ; the collective farms have been mechanised ; the surplus of labour has been absorbed in extensive industrial enterprises in mining and manufacturing, largely in the various localities themselves ; additional railways have been constructed ; and dozens of new cities have sprung up. This has been, in the main, the outcome of the First and Second Five-Year Plans of 1929 and 1933.

A New Basis for Statehood

Fundamentally what the Bolsheviks have done, and what Stalin may be thought to have long been looking for, is something which does not seem to have occurred as a possibility to western statesmen. In devising the federal organisation that we have described, they threw over, once for all and completely, the conception that statehood had, or should have, any connection with race or nationality. Political science had, for the most part, come to see, during the nineteenth century, that statehood need have nothing to do with the colour of the skin or with the profession of a particular creed. It had even sometimes contemplated the possibility of doing without a dominant national language. But right down to the resettlement of European boundaries according to the Treaty of Versailles and its fellows in 1919, the political scientists have allowed statesmen to cling to the value, if not the necessity, of a unity of race as the basis of perfect statehood. This conception is connected with, if not consciously based upon, that of an inherent and unalterable superiority of one race—usually one's own race—over others ; and with the belief, for which neither history nor biological science knows of any foundation, that what is called "purity of blood" is an attribute of the highest value. The Bolsheviks put their trust in a genuine equality of citizenship, as completely irrespective of race or language as of colour or religion.¹ They neither undervalued nor overvalued the national minority cultures. What they have sought to do is to develop every one of them, in its own vernacular and with its own peculiarities. They refused to accept the assumption that there is any necessary or inherent inferiority of one race to another. They declared that scientific anthropology knows of no race, whether white or black, of which the most promising individuals could not be immeasurably advanced by appropriate education and an improvement in economic and social environment. The Bolsheviks accordingly invented the conception of the unnational state. They abandoned the word "Russia". They formed a Union of Socialist Soviet Republics in which all races stood on one and the same equal footing. And just because it is not a national state, belonging to a superior race, the Soviet Union has set itself diligently, not merely to treat the "lesser breeds without the law" with equality, but, recognising that their backwardness was due to

¹ "Their way of dealing with Home Rule and the nationalities is a masterpiece of ingenuity and elegance. None of the able statesmen of to-day in other lands has attempted to vie with them in their method of satisfying the claims of minorities" (*Russia To-day and To-morrow*, by E. J. Dillon, 1928, p. 228).

as to secure, for even the smallest minority group, its own autonomy, as regards primary school and local officials, even against the dominant minority culture.

The Maintenance of Unity

Yet the state as a whole maintains its unity unimpaired, and has even, like other federal states, increased its centralisation of authority. It is only in the USSR that this centralisation involves no lessening of the cultural autonomy of the minorities, and even occurs concomitantly with the strengthening of the various regional cultures. This unbroken unity, and this increasing centralisation of authority, is ensured in ways that will become plain as our exposition proceeds. It will suffice for the present to note, first, that, legally and formally, the powers of the superior authorities in disallowance and cancellation, are the same over the autonomous republics and autonomous areas as over other oblasts, rayons, cities and villages; the cultural autonomy, though formally established in principle by general law, being essentially a matter of administrative practice. Next, the great levelling influence of the economic relations exemplified in widespread industrialisation and collectivism, which operate irrespective of race or nationality, or any geographical boundaries, constitute a silent but continuous unifying factor. Finally, the ubiquitous guidance and persuasion of the essentially unitary Communist Party, composed of members of every race and every distinctive culture in the USSR, ensures not only unity but also all the centralisation that is necessary.

Alongside this maintenance and strengthening of the minority cultures, there has been an unmistakable rise in the level of civilisation. Note first, and perhaps as most important, a marked increase, among the national minorities, of their own self-respect. It is, indeed, the many backward populations, which had suffered so much under tsarist repression from the nationalities policy of the Soviet Government. They have, to a considerable extent, already lost their "inferiority complex", and gained in confidence and courage. The women, in becoming literate, have become effectually free, alike from the veil and from the control of husband or father. The children have been almost universally got to school, and have been provided with technical institutes and colleges of university rank, using the vernacular. The health of the whole people has been improved. With hospitals and medical services, epidemics have been got under, and the death-rate has everywhere been greatly reduced. All this has been carried out by the local administration, largely in the hands of "natives", but with the constant guidance of the various commissariats of health and education, and of the Communist Party, with abundant encouragement and financial assistance from Moscow, always under conditions of "cultural autonomy". Even more influential in change has been the economic development. The nomadic tribes have, to a great extent, become settled agriculturists, grouped in collective farms; the

peasants have been helped to new crops ; the collective farms have been mechanised ; the surplus of labour has been absorbed in extensive industrial enterprises in mining and manufacturing, largely in the various localities themselves ; additional railways have been constructed ; and dozens of new cities have sprung up. This has been, in the main, the outcome of the First and Second Five-Year Plans of 1929 and 1933.

A New Basis for Statehood

Fundamentally what the Bolsheviks have done, and what Stalin may be thought to have long been looking for, is something which does not seem to have occurred as a possibility to western statesmen. In devising the federal organisation that we have described, they threw over, once for all and completely, the conception that statehood had, or should have, any connection with race or nationality. Political science had, for the most part, come to see, during the nineteenth century, that statehood need have nothing to do with the colour of the skin or with the profession of a particular creed. It had even sometimes contemplated the possibility of doing without a dominant national language. But right down to the resettlement of European boundaries according to the Treaty of Versailles and its fellows in 1919, the political scientists have allowed statesmen to cling to the value, if not the necessity, of a unity of race as the basis of perfect statehood. This conception is connected with, if not consciously based upon, that of an inherent and unalterable superiority of one race—usually one's own race—over others ; and with the belief, for which neither history nor biological science knows of any foundation, that what is called "purity of blood" is an attribute of the highest value. The Bolsheviks put their trust in a genuine equality of citizenship, as completely irrespective of race or language as of colour or religion.¹ They neither undervalued nor overvalued the national minority cultures. What they have sought to do is to develop every one of them, in its own vernacular and with its own peculiarities. They refused to accept the assumption that there is any necessary or inherent inferiority of one race to another. They declared that scientific anthropology knows of no race, whether white or black, of which the most promising individuals could not be immeasurably advanced by appropriate education and an improvement in economic and social environment. The Bolsheviks accordingly invented the conception of the unnational state. They abandoned the word "Russia". They formed a Union of Socialist Soviet Republics in which all races stood on one and the same equal footing. And just because it is not a national state, belonging to a superior race, the Soviet Union has set itself diligently, not merely to treat the "lesser breeds without the law" with equality, but, recognising that their backwardness was due to

¹ "Their way of dealing with Home Rule and the nationalities is a masterpiece of ingenuity and elegance. None of the able statesmen of to-day in other lands has attempted to vie with them in their method of satisfying the claims of minorities" (*Russia To-day and To-morrow*, by E. J. Dillon, 1928, p. 228).

centuries of poverty, repression and enslavement, has made it a leading feature of its policy to spend out of common funds considerably more per head on its backward races than on the superior ones, in education and social improvements, in industrial investments and agricultural reforms. The record of the USSR in this respect during the past eighteen years stands in marked contrast with the action towards their respective lower races of the governments of Holland or France, and even of that of the United Kingdom, which has been responsible for the government of India, and many of the West Indian islands, and much of Africa, for more than a century.

It is interesting to notice how the absorption of such a heterogeneous population as that of the Soviet Union into a strong and in many respects centralised state has been facilitated by the system of soviets, using the expedient of indirect election, instead of a parliament directly elected by mass votes. No widespread empire has yet found it possible to establish a parliament effectively representing its whole realm ;¹ just as none has yet attempted to carry on its whole production and distribution of commodities and services by a cabinet responsible to a single popularly elected parliamentary assembly. But the USSR finds it quite practicable and useful to let each village in Kamchatka or Sakhalin, or beyond the Arctic circle, elect its own selosoviet, and send its own deputies to the rayon congress of soviets, and so to the congress of soviets of the oblast or autonomous republic, and ultimately to the All-Union Congress of Soviets at Moscow, in exactly the same way, and with exactly the same rights, as a village in the oblast of Moscow or Leningrad. Such a remote and backward village, it must be remembered, which uses its own vernacular in its own schools and its own court of justice, enjoys, likewise, the privilege of filling the local offices, even the highest of them, with its own people. And what is of even greater importance, its residents are eligible, equally with persons of any other race or residence, for the Order or Companionship undertaking the Vocation of Leadership, which their leading members are encouraged and even pressed to join, and for which, as we shall hereafter describe, they are provided gratuitously with the necessary intensive training, returning to their homes equipped for filling any of the local offices, and even for promotion to the highest places in the Union. Not without reason, therefore, is it claimed that the soviet system has, for a far-flung empire, certain advantages over that of a directly elected parliamentary assembly.

In the foregoing lengthy analysis of the soviet organisation for the representation of "Man as a Citizen", and for his participation in the

¹ No one can seriously suggest that the admission to the French Senate and Chamber of Deputies, and even, very occasionally, to minor ministerial office, of members nominally elected by the people of Martinique, Guadeloupe, Reunion, Pondicherry, Guiana, Senegal or Cochin China (omitting Algeria, Tunis, Madagascar, etc.), amounts to any solution of the problem.

administration of public affairs, the reader might assume that he has had placed before him the constitution of the USSR. Needless to say this would be a mistake. Not all the solidity of the base of the pyramid of soviets—not all the varied specialisation of its successive tiers of councils and the administration organs connected with them—not all the centralisation of supervision and direction in the highest governing groups of statesmen, would have enabled the Soviet Union to carry through successfully, either the extensive and rapid industrialisation of so heterogeneous a country, or the extraordinary transformation of agriculture now in progress over one-sixth of the earth's land surface, without an equally elaborate organisation of "Man as a Producer", in the trade union hierarchy of all kinds of wage or salary earners, and in the various associations of owner-producers ineligible for trade union membership. There will then still remain to be considered the representation, through the consumers' cooperative movement, of "Man as a Consumer", in order to secure the maximum practicable adjustment of the nation's production to the needs and desires of every member of the community. Moreover, we suggest that not even these three particular forms of democracy, through which, as it is claimed, every adult in the USSR, with small and steadily dwindling exceptions, finds a threefold place in the constitution, would have sufficed for such a unique task as that undertaken by the Bolsheviks—the transformation, from top to bottom, of the economic, social and cultural life of the whole community of the USSR—if provision had not also been made in the constitution, by remarkable forms hitherto unknown to political science, for the continuous exercise of the Vocation of Leadership; that leadership without which there can be no consistent or continuous government of any populous state, however democratic may be its character and spirit. Before the reader can adequately appreciate the part of the constitution of the USSR that deals with "Man as a Citizen", he must take into account also the parts dealing with "Man as a Producer" and "Man as a Consumer"; and, last but certainly not least, also that dealing with the Vocation of Leadership, all of which are described in the ensuing chapters. What we have given here is therefore not a summary of the soviet constitution: this has necessarily to be reserved for the final chapter of Part I., entitled "Dictatorship or Democracy?"

CHAPTER III

MAN AS A PRODUCER

THROUGHOUT the USSR man as a producer is organised in two separate groupings, differing widely in their political, economic and social characteristics. First and foremost there are the trade unions, with inner circles of professional and craft associations, in conception derived from western Europe, more especially from Great Britain and Germany. Secondly, there are the associations of owner-producers, which—ignoring for the moment certain miscellaneous forms¹—may be either manufacturing or agricultural, springing out of the old Russian *artel* or *mir*. These two types of mass organisation, though on friendly terms and frequently helping each other, are mutually exclusive. No member of any association of owner-producers can be a member of a trade union.

SECTION I

SOVIET TRADE UNIONISM

The important place held by the trade union as a part of the constitution of the USSR has been explicitly affirmed by no less an authority than Stalin himself. Stalin was describing the various mass organisations, each of them extending from one end of the country to the other, and serving—to use his own terms—as “belts” and “levers” and “guiding forces”, all essential to what Lenin had described as the “broadly based and extremely powerful proletarian apparatus” of a federal constitution, rendering it both “supple” and effective. “What are these organisations,” Stalin continued. “First of all there are [not, be it noted the soviets, but] the trade unions, with their national and local ramifications in the form of productive, educational, cultural and other organisations. In these the workers of all trades and industries are united. These are not [Communist] Party organisations. Our trade unions can now be regarded as the general organisation of the working class now holding power in Soviet Russia. They constitute a school of communism. From them are drawn the persons best fitted to occupy the leading positions in all branches of administration. They form a link between the more advanced and the comparatively backward sections of the working class, for in them the masses of the workers are united with the vanguard.

“Second [only secondly, be it noted] we have the soviets with their manifold national and local ramifications taking the form of administrative,

¹ Such as the fishermen and the peculiar group of “Integral” cooperatives in the Far North, together with some special groups like the “war invalids” (partially disabled ex-soldiers), to be described in a subsequent section of this chapter.

industrial, military, cultural and other state organisations, together with a multitude of spontaneous mass groupings of the workers in the bodies which surround these organisations and link them up with the general population. The soviets are the mass organisations of those who labour in town and country. . . .

"Thirdly, we have cooperatives of all kinds with their multiple ramifications. . . . The cooperatives play a specially important part after the consolidation of the dictatorship of the proletariat, during the period of widespread construction. They form a link between the proletarian vanguard and the peasant masses whereby the latter can be induced to share in the work of socialist construction. . . .

"Lastly, we come to the party of the proletariat [the Communist Party], the proletarian vanguard. Its strength lies in the fact that it attracts to its ranks the best elements of all the mass organisations of the proletariat. Its function is to *unify* the work of all the mass organisations of the proletariat, without exception; and to *guide* their activities towards a single end, the liberation of the proletariat. Unification and guidance are absolutely essential. There must be unity in the proletarian struggle; the proletarian masses must be guided in their fight for power and for the upbuilding of socialism; and only the proletarian vanguard, only the party of the proletariat, is competent to unify and guide the work of the mass organisations of the proletariat."¹

*Trade Union History in the USSR*²

We need not describe the slow beginning of Russian trade unionism in the last decades of the nineteenth century under conditions of illegality

¹ *Leninism*, by Josef Stalin, vol. i., 1928, pp. 29-31.

We need not take too seriously the relative positions that Stalin assigned to the various blocks of the constitutional structure of the USSR—either when he puts the trade unions first, or when he puts the Communist Party last!

² The book and pamphlet literature on soviet trade unionism during the past sixteen years has been enormous. We may cite first the publications of the International Labour Office of the League of Nations, such as *The Trade Union Movement in Soviet Russia* (1927, xii and 287 pp.); and *Wages and Regulations of Conditions of Labour in the USSR*, by S. Zagorsky (1930, viii and 212 pp.). To these may be added *Selection of Documents Relative to Labour Legislation in Force in the USSR* (British Government Stationery Office, 1931, 200 pp.).

Perhaps the most informative book down to 1928 is the admirable monograph entitled *Soviet Trade Unions*, by Robert W. Dunn (1928, New York Vanguard Press, ix and 238 pp.); and down to 1931, *The Soviet Worker*, by Joseph Freeman (1932, vii and 408 pp.); and *Die russischen Gewerkschaften; ihre Entwicklung, ihre Zielsetzung und ihre Stellung zum Staat*, by Michael Jakobson (Berlin, 1932, 188 pp.). See also "Wages Policy in Soviet Russia", by S. Lawford Childs and A. A. Crottet, in *Economic History*, January 1932; "The Transformation of Soviet Trade Unions", by Amy Hewes, in *American Economic Review*, December 1932; *The Trade Unions, the Party and the State*, by M. Tomsy (Moscow, 1927, 22 pp.); and *The October Revolution and the Trade Unions*, by A. Abolin (Cooperative Publishing Society of Foreign Workers in the USSR, Moscow, 1933, 54 pp.). Much is to be learned from *After Lenin*, by Michael Farbman, 1924; *Civic Training in Soviet Russia*, 1929, and *Making Bolsheviks*, 1932, both by Professor S. N. Harper; *Soviet Russia*, by William G. Chamberlin (1930, viii and 453 pp.); and *The Economic Life of Soviet Russia*, by Calvin B. Hoover, 1931. *The Report of the Ninth All-Union Congress of Trade Unions* (in English, Moscow, 1933) is invaluable. Several of the above give extensive lists of Russian documents and works.

and constant police persecution.¹ It is sufficient to note that, in the revolutionary movement of 1905, combinations of industrial wage-earners spontaneously arose in all the industrial areas. These trade unions, together with the contemporary soviets of "workers and peasants", were, in fact, the organs of the popular upheaval. In 1905, and again in 1906, an All-Russian Trade Union Conference was held in Moscow, representing some 600 separate unions, with about 250,000 members. In 1907 a second conference opened up relations with the trade union movement in western Europe, and actually sent a delegation to the International Labour and Socialist Congress at Stuttgart. All this activity was summarily suppressed by the Tsar's police in 1908, when 107 unions were dissolved by a single ukase, and in the following years the Russian trade union movement was practically destroyed.² Various industrial centres, however, kept alive "underground" groups of "illegal" propagandists. "The industrial boom," Trotsky tells us, "beginning in 1910, lifted the workers to their feet and gave a new impulse to their energy. The figures [of strikes] for 1912-1914 almost repeat those for 1905-1907, but in the opposite order; not from above downwards but from below upwards. On a new and higher historical basis—there are more workers now, and they have more experience—a new revolutionary offensive begins. The first half-year of 1914 clearly approaches, in the number of political strikes, the culminating point of the year of the first revolution. But war breaks out and sharply interrupts this process. The first war months are marked by political inertness in the working class, but already in the spring of 1915 the numbness begins to pass. A new cycle of political strikes opens, a cycle which in February 1917 will culminate in the insurrection of soldiers and workers."³

It has been estimated, however, that, on the outbreak of the revolution in February 1917, the total membership of all the trade unions throughout the Russian empire cannot have exceeded a few tens of thousands. During the interval between the February and October revolutions, trade unionism spread with startling rapidity through all the industrial areas. By June

¹ The earliest attempts at trade unionism in Russia appear to date only from 1875, when Zaslavsky, "an organiser and propagandist of talent", established at Odessa a "Union of the Workers of Southern Russia", having industrial as well as political aims, which was promptly suppressed with severe punishment, no word about it being allowed to appear in the newspapers. In 1879 a similar "Union of the Workers of Northern Russia" was established at St. Petersburg by a carpenter named Stevan Khaltourine, whose efforts were suppressed in 1881 (*Histoire du parti communiste de l'URSS (parti bolcheviki)*, par E. Yaroslavsky, Paris, 1931, pp. 24-25; see also *From Peter the Great to Lenin*, by S. P. Turin, 1935, p. 34).

² "The unions were prohibited from assisting strikers; they were closed down for attempting to intervene in the great strike movement; members of the executives were arrested and exiled to Siberia; funds were confiscated, and books were taken to the police stations; police were present at all meetings, which were closed down on the slightest pretext, and very often without any reason at all. . . . The iron fist of the victorious reaction ruthlessly crushed the labour organisations at their birth" (*Trade Unions in Soviet Russia*, by A. Losovsky, p. 15; *Soviet Trade Unions*, by Robert W. Dunn, 1928, p. 16).

³ *History of the Russian Revolution*, by L. Trotsky, 1932, vol. i. p. 55.

1917 there were already 967 separate organisations, with an aggregate membership of a million and a half. In that month the third All-Russian Conference of Trade Unions was held, when a standing committee or executive board was appointed to guide the policy of the movement. By October 1917 the total trade union membership had come to exceed two millions.

Meanwhile there had developed a sharp rivalry between the trade unions, based on organisation by trades and directed mainly by the Mensheviks, and the "Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies", based on organisation by factories which were being permeated and presently dominated by the Bolsheviks. Both the trade unions and the new soviets were intimately connected with the factory committees, which had sprung up spontaneously in most of the large establishments in Leningrad and Moscow. We give the issue in the words of a subsequent trade union leader. In June 1917 he writes: "At the Third All-Russian Trade Union Conference (the first after the February revolution of 1917), the trade unions split into two wings on one of the fundamental questions of Leninism—that of the bourgeois-democratic revolution growing into a socialist revolution. The Mensheviks, the Bundists [the separate organisation of the Jewish workmen] and the Social Revolutionaries, mainly representing the non-industrial unions and the small urban centres (of the industrial unions, the only one which constituted a firm bulwark of the Mensheviks, and that only temporarily, was the printers' union), based their argument on the premiss that the revolution which was developing, both in its objective political sense and in its content, was a bourgeois revolution; and they therefore held that the only tasks of this revolution were those of bourgeois democratic reform. The Bolshevik premiss was the opposite. The Bolsheviks held that the growing revolution was a proletarian and socialist revolution, and that it would also incidentally complete the tasks of a bourgeois-democratic revolution."¹ In his admirable work entitled *Civic Training in Soviet Russia*, Professor S. N. Harper has described this internal feud and its relation to the structure of soviet trade unionism. "An All-Russian Conference of Factory Committees was held on the very eve of the October revolution. It was called on the initiative of the Bolsheviks, to compete with the executive board set up by the trade union conference of June (1917), at which the Mensheviks had the majority. This struggle between the rival party factions for the control of the organisations of the workmen was decided by the October revolution. After the victory of the Bolsheviks, the factory committees and the trade unions were combined, the former becoming the primary units of the latter." In January 1919 the first All-Russian Congress of Trade Unions was convened in Petrograd. It claimed an authority superior to that of the previous conferences. It decided to support the "dictatorship of the proletariat" established by Lenin, and to assist vigorously in building up the socialist

¹ *The October Revolution and the Trade Unions*, by A. Abolin, p. 7 (Cooperative Publishing Society of Foreign Workers in the USSR, 1933, 54 pp.).

state throughout the RSFSR. "For this purpose", it declared, "factory committees must become local organs of the union, and must not carry on an existence separate and apart from the trade union."¹ The central committee of the factory committees was therefore to be abolished. Some of the unions, records Professor Harper, or at any rate some of their branches, such as that of the Moscow printers, "would not recognise the congress", continuing for a time their independent existence, as a protest against the Bolshevik seizure of power.

During the ensuing decade the position and functions of the trade unions in the soviet state became the subject of acute controversy. If we are to realise where they now stand in the constitution, we must briefly summarise the successive stages of this hotly contested dispute. For the first few months after October 1917, as we shall subsequently describe, the workmen assumed that they were, by their committees in the several factories, to take over the whole function of the owners and managers of the enterprises in which they were employed. In some cases, the workers' committee formally appointed, not only the foremen, but also the previous proprietor, whom they made their manager. Nor was this conception confined to the Petrograd factories. There was a brief period during which the running of the trains on the Petrograd-Moscow railway was decided by the station staffs. Even on vessels of the Soviet mercantile marine, the captains took their navigation orders from the committee elected by the ship's company. Within six months, however, Lenin decided that such a form of workers' control led only to chaos, and that there must be, in every case, a manager appointed by and responsible to the appropriate organ of the government. But for a long time the workers' committees in the factories retained a large measure of control. They had to be consulted by the manager on every matter in which they felt an interest. In many cases they appointed the manager's chief assistant. Even the captain of a ship had such an assistant, who scrutinised every decision. But the workmen's most effective control over industry was afforded by the fact that the government's boards or commissions had, in their membership, a large proportion of the leaders of the trade unions. The trade unions were strongly represented on the Central Executive Committee and the Supreme Economic Council. They nominated the

¹ In addition to Professor S. N. Harper's *Civic Training in Soviet Russia*, the student should compare, for this controversy, the valuable summary in *After Lenin*, by Michael Farbman, 1924, p. 142, etc.; and the interesting pamphlet by A. Abolin, *The October Revolution and the Trade Unions* (Cooperative Publishing Society of Foreign Workers in the USSR, Moscow, 1933, 54 pp.). The last-named work gives the following statistics showing the gradual triumph of the Bolsheviks: "At the Third Conference of Trade Unions, held in June 1917, the Bolsheviks and their adherents constituted 36.4 per cent, whilst the Mensheviks and their adherents constituted 55.5 per cent. At the First Congress of Trade Unions, held in January 1918, the Bolsheviks and their adherents represented as much as 65.6 per cent, whilst the Mensheviks and their adherents were only 21.4 per cent. At the Fifth Congress of Trade Unions, the Mensheviks and their sympathisers were represented by only 2.2 per cent, while the Bolsheviks numbered 91.7 per cent" (*ibid.* p. 13).

People's Commissar for Labour. It was very largely they who manned the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection.

Upon this confusion of powers and responsibilities there supervened the Civil War, which submerged all controversy. The trade unions threw themselves whole-heartedly into the struggle, and supplied a large part of the government's fighting forces. The union offices became principally recruiting centres, whilst the work of nearly every industrial establishment was concentrated on supplying the needs of the Red Army. The unions became, in substance if not in form, government organs. Membership was, by mere majority vote in each factory, made compulsory for all those at work. Trade union dues were simply stopped from wages, and any trade union deficit was met by one or other of the forms of government subsidy.¹

With the final expulsion from soviet territory of the last of the hostile armies, and the oncoming of the great famine, there came in 1921, as the only means of providing the necessaries of life whilst the government was building up the heavy industries, the New Economic Policy (NEP), temporarily allowing a limited amount of private capitalist enterprise for individual profit. What, then, was to be the position of the trade unions? Trotsky argued, from his military experience, that the industrial workers could best be organised as a labour army, and that the trade unions should be formally incorporated in the state machinery as government organs, through which common action could be ensured and industrial discipline maintained. Lenin, on the other hand, objected to this as a monstrous extension of bureaucracy. He realised also that NEP would inevitably produce the old trade disputes, for dealing with which an independent trade unionism was indispensable. Moreover, in the large enterprises, which were to remain governmental, there could be no going back from management by qualified technicians and administrators, who must be appointed by such state organs as the trusts. Lenin argued that the unions would have their hands full, at least for some time to come, with defending the interests of the workers against exploitation by the private "Nepmen", even more than against the evils of bureaucracy in the governmental trusts. It was accordingly officially decided, in December 1921, that the trade unions should be made independent of government machinery and control, and that, whilst they should continue

¹ "During the period of War Communism, we went through a stage of inflation, falling currency, and we could not collect our trade union dues regularly . . . at that time we took money from the state. The state subsidised us. Now we have a stable currency, we take no subsidies from the state, except that which is provided for by the constitution and the law, and which flows logically from the very nature of the proletarian state. The code of labour laws, paragraph 155, runs: 'In accordance with statute 10 of the constitution of the RSFSR, all organs of the state must render to the industrial unions and their organisations every assistance, place at their disposal fully equipped premises to be used as Palaces of Labour, charge reduced rates for public services, such as posts, telegraphs, telephones, railway and shipping rates, etc.' These are the privileges and subsidies afforded to us" (*The Trade Unions, the Party and the State*, by M. Tomsky, Moscow, 1927, p. 20).

to be essentially schools of communism, their specific function should be to improve their members' material conditions, both by resisting exploitation by private employers, and "by rectifying the faults and exaggerations of economic bodies so far as they proceed from a bureaucratic perversion of the machinery of the state". "The chief task of the trade unions," it was stated, is, "from now onward, to safeguard at all times in every possible way, the class interests of the proletariat in its struggle with capitalism. This task should be openly given prominence. Trade Union machinery must be correspondingly reconstructed, reshaped and made complete. There should be organised conflict commissions, strike funds, mutual aid funds and so on."¹

It will be seen that, in setting up the several trade unions as independent defenders of the material interests of their members, primarily against the newly revived profit-making employers, their relation to the government as employer was left in some ambiguity. It was therefore natural that each trade union should push for higher wages for its own members, irrespective both of the effect on the workers in other industries and of the wider interests of the community as a whole. So long as the profit-making capitalism of NEP continued, this ambiguity in the trade union relation to government employment remained undecided. The trade unions did not object to the view that, whilst the working day should be shortened, the total output had to be augmented. They willingly agreed to an almost universal adoption of piecework rates, under which both output and individual earnings were increased. But when the policy of NEP was reversed, and government or cooperative employment became universal, it was not easy for the workers to realise that they, as a class, had no enemy left to fight. Any further increase in their wages, beyond that accompanied by an equivalent increase in production, could no longer be taken from the income of a private profit-maker. It now involved a definite encroachment on the amounts to be set aside for the social services and for the desired multiplication of factories and increase of machinery, development of electrification and so on, which, to the whole community of workers, were, in the long run, as necessary as their wages.

With the introduction of the Five-Year Plan matters came to a crisis. At the Eighth All-Union Congress of Trade Unions, in 1928-1929, a sharp conflict took place. Tomsky, who had been President of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions (AUCCTU), the supreme organ of the whole trade union movement, bluntly put the position of the trade unions in the USSR as being substantially the same as in the capitalist states. He emphasised the importance of the complete freedom of each of the trade unions to press, as far as it could, for further and further improvements in the material conditions of its own members, on the assumption that it was in such increases in wages in particular industries that the

¹ Report of commission (of which Lenin was a member) of December 1921, summarised in *Soviet Trade Unions*, by Robert W. Dunn (New York, 1928), pp. 26-27.

prosperity of the nation consisted. It was not for the trade unions, he declared, to press for improvements in factory technique, even if these would lead to increased productivity. He (or one of his supporters) is reported to have said that the government must indeed be hard up if it wanted "socialist competition" among the workers to increase output! He did not see how the trade unions could control the industries on the basis of commercial accounting, and be at the same time the representatives and defenders of the interests of their own members.

Against Tomsky's view of trade union function,¹ the whole influence of the Communist Party was thrown. It was not for such an anarchic scramble after rises in wages by the strongest trade unions, irrespective of their effect on the required universal increase of industrial productivity, that Lenin had restored trade union independence. The very existence of the Soviet State, it was held, depended on the bound forward of industrial productivity being universal; and, even if only from the standpoint of permanently securing higher wages for their own members, it was this universally increased production that it was the duty of the trade unions to promote. At the very congress, in December 1928, at which Tomsky, then making his last stand, so bluntly expressed his own views, the majority of the delegates were induced to elect to the all-powerful presidium of the AUCCTU, L. M. Kaganovich, an assistant secretary of the Communist Party, who had been specially selected for this service, and who devoted himself for the next two years to a continuous educational campaign among the committee-men and other "activists" in trade unionism, leading to a far-reaching reorganisation of trade union executives in personnel as well as in policy. This was accompanied, at the beginning of 1930, by a general purge in all departments of the state, as a result of the suspicion aroused as to lack of cordial cooperation in soviet policy by persons not sprung from the manual labour class. It was found that "on January 1, 1930, only 9 per cent of the personnel of the AUCCTU were of working-class origin. The percentage of former members of other parties to the total number of communists [Party members] was as follows: In the AUCCTU 41.9 per cent; in the central council of metal workers 37 per cent; in the central council of printers 24 per cent, etc. The purge exposed 19 persons of alien class origin in the newspaper *Trud*, persons originating from among the merchants, nobles, priests, etc. There were 18 descendants of nobles and merchants in the central committee of the trade union of soviet employees. In eleven central committees of trade

¹ Tomsky's view of the task of trade unionism seemed, in 1927, quite satisfactory to an exceptionally competent and sympathetic American observer. "'As long as the wage system exists in any country,' says Chairman Tomsky of the AUCCTU, '... the worker will naturally demand higher wages than he receives. It is the duty of the trade unions to know the industry and each factory unit and its possibilities for meeting the demands of the workers'" (*Soviet Trade Unions*, by Robert W. Dunn, 1928, p. 82). But soviet theory holds that the demands of the workers should not be related to the productivity of "each factory unit", but to that of the industry as a whole; and not even to that of a particular industry, but to that of soviet industries in general, preferably advancing as nearly as possible uniformly all along the line.

unions 53 personages were found who, in the past, were actively alien and hostile to the proletariat."¹ These disaffected elements were eliminated.

When the time came for the Ninth All-Union Congress of Trade Unions, in 1931, the current of opinion among the organised workers had been changed. Tomskey had, in the interval, on other grounds, fallen out with the Central Committee of the Communist Party ; and had retired in 1929 from trade union leadership, at first from ill health, eventually taking another honourable but less influential office.²

After the Congress of 1928-1929, the All-Union Central Committee of Trade Unions (AUCCTU), under Kaganovich's influence, enjoined all trade unionists to "face production", and look to the output, not merely of their own factory, or even of their own industry, but of soviet industries as a whole. The Sixteenth All-Union Congress of the Communist Party, in 1930, decided that it was the duty of the trade unions actually to take the lead in promoting "socialist competition", and also to organise "shock brigades" (udarniki) in order to raise to the utmost the productivity of the whole community. Not unnaturally, this lesson was hard to learn. It has taken nearly a decade to persuade the strongest defenders of trade unionism that its function as an "organ of revolt" against the autocracy of each capitalist employer, and as an instrument for extracting from his profits the highest possible wage for the manual workers whom he employed, had passed away with the capitalist employer himself.³ It required long-continued instruction to convince all the workmen that when they, in the aggregate, had the disposal of the entire net product of the nation's combined industry, it was not in the "profits" of each establishment, but in the total amount produced by the conjoined labours of the whole of them, that they were pecuniarily interested ; and that what trade union organisation had to protect was, not so much the wage-rates of the workers in particular industries, as the earnings, and, indeed, the whole conditions of life, inside the factory and outside, of all the wage-earners of the USSR.

Trade Union Structure in the USSR

We are now in a position to appreciate the difference between the structure of the trade unions in Soviet Communism from that of those of

¹ *Report of Ninth Congress of Trade Unions, 1931*, pp. 25-26.

² He was appointed in 1931 to be director of Gosisdatt (subsequently called Ogiz), the great state publishing establishment of the RSFSR. The struggle is summarised in *Die russischen Gewerkschaften*, by Michael Jakobson, 1932, pp. 141-143.

³ This has to be perpetually impressed, not only on young recruits but also on experienced foreign trade unionists working in the USSR. "The primary task of the trade unions in the Soviet Union", declared Shvernik, the Secretary of the All-Union Central Committee of the Trade Unions, in an address to 130 foreign worker delegates, in the Moscow Palace of Labour (*Moscow Daily News*, November 12, 1932), "is to make workers realise that, as the sole owners of the means of production, they must learn to take responsibility for the maintenance of these means." Hence, he continued, "the soviet trade union is not an isolated body, but an integral part of the entire soviet system, assisting in the fulfilment of production programmes by organising socialist competition and shock brigades, and attending to the cultural and economic requirements of the workers".

Britain or the United States. The British or American trade union, being formed to fight the employers in each industry against any lowering of the wage-rates of particular crafts, and using for this purpose the device of collective bargaining to prevent the cut-throat competition among unemployed workmen for particular jobs, takes the form of a combination of workers of a particular craft, or, in the alternative, of a particular industry, seizing every opportunity for extracting higher wages from the employers of the particular establishments in which the members are employed. Each craft or industry, desperately anxious to save its own members from the morass of unemployment, accordingly fights for its own hand, irrespective of the effect on the cost of production of the establishment as a whole, or on the wage-rates of other crafts or industries. The soviet trade union, on the other hand, is not formed to fight anybody, and has no inducement to prevent the competition among workmen for particular jobs. The pecuniary interest of its members is found in the productivity of soviet industry in general, which is made up of the productivity of all the factories in which they work ; and it is this aggregate productivity, not anybody's profits, on which the standard wage-rates of all of them will directly depend. Moreover, apart from money wages, the soviet trade union is interested in its members' protection against industrial accidents, and the amenity and healthfulness of their places of work ; in discussing and advising on the plans on which the factory is carried on ; in conducting the comrades' courts in which the members themselves deal with minor delinquencies of their own number ; in the amount of food and other commodities that, in the " factory cooperative " (including the newly developed factory farms), can be got for the money wage ; in the administration of the sickness and accident and old-age pension insurance, which is entrusted to the local committee that the factory elects ; in the " legal bureaux " which it maintains for the aid of its members in obtaining their rights ; in the housing accommodation secured for the personnel ; in the club-house which the factory provides for the members' recreation and education ; in the holiday resorts, opportunities for travel, and tickets for theatre and opera that the union secures for its members. It will be noted that in all this large and ever-growing sphere of trade union functions, the trade union acts as an organisation not of producers, for its members do not produce these services, but of consumers, in which all the workers in the enterprise are equally concerned.

This brings us to the most important difference in structure between trade unionism in the USSR and that in other countries : as the soviet trade unions have not to fight profit-making employers, but to share in the organisation of the industry in which they are engaged, it is the establishment as a whole, not any particular craft within it, and the whole of the establishments turning out the same kind of product, not any particular branch of the industry, that is made the unit of trade union structure. And as all those working in the establishment are cooperatively creating the product, and not only those of any particular craft, or grade,

age, or sex, trade union membership logically embraces the whole staff of personnel of the establishment, from the general manager to the office-boy, from the foreman to the apprentice, from the most scientifically qualified specialist to the least skilled general labourer.¹

Hence the trade union in the USSR is neither a craft nor an industrial union. It is nearest to what has been called, in Great Britain, an employment union, in its most ideal comprehensiveness in a national monopoly. All those who work within any one establishment—the manager, the technicians, the clerks and book-keepers, the foremen, the artisans and labourers, the factory doctors and nurses, and even the canteen cooks and cleaners, and this entire personnel in all the establishments producing the same commodity or service throughout the USSR—are included in the union, whether the object of the nation-wide enterprise be extracting, manufacturing, transporting or distributing commodities, or rendering administrative or cultural services of any kind.

A further principle, following from that of looking to the product instead of to the profit, is that of nation-wide organisation by establishments. All the tens of thousands of establishments in the USSR are grouped together for trade union purposes according to their several predominant products. This involves that all the wage-earners in each establishment should belong to the particular trade union in which the establishment is included. There are now no local trade unions, any more than craft or industrial unions. The number of separate unions, which has varied from time to time, was brought down to 23; then raised in 1931 to 47; and on the comprehensive reorganisation in 1934, further increased to 154, having memberships ranging from less than a hundred thousand to half a million or so. We may add that, at the end of 1933 the aggregate contributing membership of the trade unions amounted to about eighteen million persons—far more than in the trade unions of all the rest of the world put together—representing a total census population of something like forty millions, being at least one-fourth of that of the whole of the USSR.²

¹ It is to be noted that "the one-shop one-union principle" was laid down as axiomatic at the Second Trade Union Conference of 1906, and has ever since been increasingly followed in (*Soviet Trade Unions*, by Robert W. Dunn, 1928, pp. 13-14). The railway workers' union (AZRG), which was the first effectively to establish a union for the whole country, included from the outset all grades of railway employees, in all districts, from the highest superintendents to the lowest firemen (*Die russischen Gewerkschaften*, by Isak Jakobson, 1932, p. 9).

² The non-unionists among the wage-earners, of whom at any particular date there may be as many as four or five millions, comprise in the main: (a) newly engaged peasants fresh from the farms, and other recruits for the first three months of their service; (b) seasonal workers returning periodically to peasant households, though some sections of these, like the Leningrad dock labourers, are strongly unionised; (c) workers in newly established isolated factories distant from industrial centres, to which trade union organisation has not yet spread; (d) isolated wage-earners or small groups, engaged at wages by the State or on peasant farms; (e) a steadily diminishing proportion of boys and girls under sixteen; and (f) an uncertain number of the "deprived" categories, statutorily excluded from trade union membership, but unobtrusively allowed to continue in employment at wages or on salaries, sometimes because their services are particularly useful.

The aggregate membership in past years is given as under :

1917 . . .	1,475,000	1920 . . .	5,122,006
1918 . . .	1,946,000	1921 . . .	8,418,362
1919 . . .	3,706,779		

The total then fell to 5,846,000, largely due to the exclusion of individual independent handicraftsmen (*kustari*) and members of cooperative associations of owner-producers, or of the old *artels*. It continued to decline until 1923. It then rose as under :

1924 . . .	5,822,700	1926 . . .	8,768,200
1925 . . .	6,950,000	1927 . . .	9,827,000

The trade union hierarchy—we use this word, as already explained, without any implication of dependence upon a superior authority—like the other parts of the USSR constitutional structure, is built up, in each trade union, by a series of indirect elections based at the bottom upon direct popular election by the members of that union, whether paid by wages or salaries, irrespective of sex, craft, vocation, grade or amount of remuneration ; assembled in relatively small meetings of men and women actually associated in work, whether by hand or by brain, in any kind of industrial or other establishment. This trade union organisation has been only gradually formed into a broadly based pyramid uniform in its constitution in all trade unions all over the USSR, and this evolution has even now not reached complete identity. As it stood in 1933 it was well summarised in a speech by Shvernik, the General Secretary of the All-Union Central Committee of Trade Unions (AUCCTU). “ We have at present ”, he said, “ forty-seven unions, each headed by its own central committee. The central committees . . . have regional committees . . . under them ; then come the factory committees [*fabkom*] and the local committees [*mestkom*] in soviet institutions ; and in addition to these the trade union group organisers. This principle of building up the trade unions . . . has enabled us to bring all enterprises, all soviet and [trading] business

In September 1934, Shvernik (Secretary of the All-Union Central Committee of Trade Unions), in propounding the scheme of reorganisation, complained that 22 per cent of all those employed for wages or salary in the USSR were outside the trade unions ; he said that the agricultural state farm workers' union had only 49 per cent, and the stock-breeding state farm workers' union and that of the peat workers only 54 per cent of the persons employed, whilst the railway-construction workers had no more than 61 per cent. Even the machine-tractor station workers had only 73 per cent, the building trades workers only 74 per cent, and the miners only 77 per cent in their respective unions (*Moscow Daily News*, September 10, 1934).

The rules for admission, as revised in September 1931 by the All-Union Congress of Trade Unions (AZRG), run as follows : All permanent wage (or salary) earners may join a trade union during the first days of employment. Seasonal workers may be admitted as soon as they have completed two months' uninterrupted work, and this waiting period may be waived if they were engaged as seasonal workers in the previous year. Members of collective farms engaging in industrial, transport or building work as wage (or salary) earners may at once join the appropriate union (*Ekonomicheskaja Zhizn*, September 16, 1931).

institutions within the sphere of trade union organisation. [There are now 513,000 trade union groups, but] the basic nucleus . . . is the factory committee [fabkom] and the local committee or *mestkom* in soviet and [commercial] business organisations. There are 186,640 . . . committees of this kind. There are 888 regional departments . . . and . . . 47 central committees of trade unions. . . . All branches of national economy are covered by the trade union organisations, which unite in their ranks 75 per cent of the total number of those working [for wages or salaries] in our national economy."¹

The basis of the trade union hierarchy is the meeting or meetings for the choice of the factory committee (fabkom) which, in government offices and trading establishments and in all non-industrial institutions, is called the local committee (mestkom). The rule is to have one such committee covering the whole of each establishment. But in the great cities there are enterprises so small that several of them have to be grouped together to elect one factory committee. Such a tiny unit is, however, more characteristic of the non-industrial establishments, such as hospitals or other medical institutions; schools, colleges and universities, and research institutions; and the local offices of government departments. As was the case also before the revolution, the characteristic industrial establishment (or "plant") in the industry of the USSR has thousands of workers employed in its various departments, in numerous separate buildings erected upon an extensive site, which often exceeds in area a square mile. Thus the Rostselmash Agricultural Machine Works at Rostov-on-Don, which is not by any means the largest plant, but which employs as many as 13,000 workers, has 32 separate shops, in which there are no fewer than 481 "brigades".² Each brigade has its own meetings for discussion, and also for the election of its own trade union organiser and "educational organiser", these being usually unpaid officers. There should also be an unpaid "dues-collector" for each, and one or more "insurance" delegates. Each shop also holds its own shop meetings, at one of which a "shop committee" of seven members is elected for the ensuing half-year, with a president and a secretary. For the factory committee in this great establishment the trade union members assemble half-yearly in their several "shops", 32 in number, each of which elects one delegate, or in the larger shops two or three, making 51 altogether. The total number of members of the 186,640 fabkoms and mestkoms in the USSR is estimated at something like two millions, to which must be added another million or so of members of the various sub-committees or commissions working under these committees. Thus, apart from the

¹ *Speech of Welcome to Foreign Delegates*, by N. M. Shvernik, General Secretary of the AUCCTU, delivered May 8, 1933 (Moscow: Cooperative Publishing Society of Foreign Workers in the USSR, 1933, p. 6). The number of trade union groups given in Shvernik's speech to the Ninth All-Union Trade Union Congress itself; see "The Soviet Trade Unions on the Threshold of the Second Five-Year Plan" in *Report of the Ninth Trade Union Congress* (same publishers, p. 94).

² A brigade may be a particular shift, or a group engaged on a common job.

officers, paid and unpaid, at least 15 per cent of the trade union members are actively engaged in committee work.¹

Trade Union Elections in the USSR

It must not be supposed that these trade union elections are tame and lifeless affairs. The resolutions of the Sixteenth All-Union Congress of the Communist Party, repeated in substance at the Fifth Plenum of the AUCCTU in 1931, went into elaborate detail as to the steps to be taken, in every establishment in every trade union in every part of the USSR, to make the election an occasion for a stirring campaign among all the wage-earners, in which the "activists"—those who actually took part in the campaigning work—numbered more than two millions; in Moscow alone more than 160,000.²

Nor was the trade union election campaign of 1931 an exceptional effort. In 1933 we find the AUCCTU, which is the apex of the trade union pyramid for the whole USSR, again issuing detailed instructions for a still

¹ It may be noted that these popular meetings for trade union business (including elections of delegates to other councils and committees) differ in the following respects from the meetings of workers, also held in the factories, offices or institutions but separately and at different dates, from which emanate the soviet hierarchy. The trade union meeting (a) admits workers under eighteen, but is confined to those of all ages contributing to the trade union; (b) its decisions within its own sphere of action, and not contrary to law, can be vetoed only by the higher authorities of the trade union hierarchy, not by those of the soviet hierarchy; (c) it has nothing corresponding to the non-factory meetings where the so-called unorganised workers, being either domestic workers or those who are not working for wage or salary, can vote for the soviet.

The trade union meetings are invariably held on the premises of the factory, office or institution, which have to be placed gratuitously at the disposal of the trade union for this purpose, either in the evening or at some other time outside working hours that is most convenient to those entitled to attend. Although the minimum age for admission to trade union membership is sixteen, only those who have attained the age of eighteen are entitled to vote at elections. Those employed part time in more than one factory, office or institute may attend the meetings of all of them, but may vote only once at any election.

² See Shvernik's speech to Ninth All-Union Trade Union Congress ("The Soviet Trade Unions on the Threshold of the Second Five-Year Plan", 1933, p. 96). As an immediate outcome of this campaign throughout the USSR no fewer than 1,200,000 applications were made for trade union membership, more than 150,000 for membership of the Young Communist League (Comsomols), and 160,000 for membership of the Communist Party. "The ranks of the shock-workers were reinforced by the addition of 920,000 new workers. 130,000 new shock-brigades and business-accounting brigades were organised and 250,000 workers' recommendations submitted (to the managements). . . . As a result of this campaign a number of enterprises began to overhaul their industrial and financial plans. Summing up the work of the trade unions in connection with the election campaign we must say outright that in no other country save the USSR, in no other trade unions save those of the soviets, is there such a highly developed trade union democracy" (*ibid.*).

In the "collective agreement campaign" at Dniepropetrovsk in 1933, "in preparation for the approaching Ninth Congress of Trade Unions", "the 40,000 workers of the Dniepropetrovsk steel plant responded . . . with great enthusiasm. During this period 282 new shock-brigades and 98 cost-accounting brigades were organised. The Communist Party recruited 286 new members; 60 joined the trade union. More than 75 per cent of the workers attend technical schools" (pamphlet by L. Kaufmann, published by the Cooperative Publishing Society of Foreign Workers in the USSR, 1932: see also *Moscow News*, weekly edition, March 23, 1932).

greater campaign.¹ It commands that, for 1933, these elections "must be made the occasion for resolute proletarian self-criticism, both through voluntary 'check-up' brigades of the workers, reviewing the work of their representatives, and through 'mass-accounting' meetings, where every trade union official, from the group dues-collector to the president of the factory (or 'plant') committee, must report, to union members and non-members alike, what he has accomplished during the year. The 'election campaign' must help in the drive against absenteeism, in training new workers and taking them into the union, and in spreading knowledge of constructive achievements. It should give a new impulse to socialist competition and shock-brigade work, as well as in action for improving workers' living conditions. . . . All the work of the election campaign should be based on socialist competition between the various trade union groups within the plant (establishment), and between plants, for the best mobilisation of the working masses to carry out the Plan; the greatest improvement in living conditions; 100 per cent attendance at election meetings; enrolment of new workers into the union." Prior to the actual election meetings, there are to be preliminary "accounting" meetings, when every officer and representative must give an account of his stewardship; and also discussion meetings in the groups formed by brigades or shifts. The account of the work done must be put in the "wall newspapers", which should be renewed daily whilst the campaign lasts; and full use must be made of the radio, the movies, the local press, "evenings of questions and answers", meetings of wives and children of workers, and so on, in order to "mobilise the masses" to take part in the elections and to understand the problems. To draw up the programme of the election campaign, and to fix the dates of the various meetings, together with the publication of the names of candidates and the actual conduct of the election, will be the work of special election commissions for each shop and for the whole establishment, chosen by trade union members at the accounting or special meetings, and confirmed by the next higher trade union authority. Nominations may be made orally at a meeting, or by handing in a signed list of names. Five days before the election, the list of candidates must be posted in all main shops, departments, clubs, "Red Corners", residential barracks and workmen's trains, together with the production experience of, and the social work accomplished by each candidate, with the name of his nominator. At the election meeting there must be 75 per cent present of the trade union members actually working on that date. Voting is by show of hands, to be counted by special counters elected by the meeting. To be elected, a candidate must be approved by at least 60 per cent of the voters present. A mere plurality cannot elect.

We have no information as to the extent of the "liveliness" of these

¹ See the lengthy and detailed instructions for the "election campaign" published in the official trade union organ *Trud*, of which a summary appeared in the *Moscow Daily News*, December 12, 1932.

trade union election campaigns throughout the whole country; and it may well be that, over so vast an area as the USSR, with electorates of very different habits and capacities, the well-meant instructions emanating from the highest trade union authority will not always be fully obeyed. But we have been impressed by various testimonies on the subject. The workers' meetings are frequent and well attended, to the extent of 50, and sometimes even 75 per cent of the whole body, and by women as well as by men. They are the occasions for much unrestrained discussion of persons, as well as of industrial policy, and local conditions of life. There is a laudable desire to encourage the newer and younger members, and to recruit the committees with new blood. And—what seems to us very noteworthy—the members of the Communist Party, who undoubtedly constitute most of the “activists” giving liveliness to an election campaign, do not monopolise the places. On the contrary, they definitely promote the election of a considerable number of “non-Party” candidates, in order, as they quite frankly say, to bring them effectively into the work of administration, which to be successful, needs to be based upon proper representation of the whole people.¹

The total number of meetings in the USSR for the election of factory committees, even within each of the 154 trade unions, has not been ascertained, but is evidently very large—in some of these unions running into tens of thousands. For the entire eighteen million membership of the whole 154 unions, the number of such meetings concerned in the election of no fewer than 513,000 groups, brigades or shifts, and about one-third of that number of committees, must run into something like a million. As these members' meetings are held at intervals throughout the year—though only once or twice a year for the purpose of electing the factory committee—their aggregate number, in the whole USSR, must be in the neighbourhood of five millions in every twelve-month—certainly a broad popular base for the trade union hierarchy!

But these members' meetings are much more than the base of a hierarchy. The political science student must not allow the excitement of the election campaigns in the trade unions to obscure the more solid daily work of the various committees and commissions, regional councils and central committees of each union, in which, as we have seen, apart from the salaried officials, not fewer than a couple of million members are continuously engaged. It must be remembered that the *fabkom* and *mestkom* have a large part to play in the current administration of the factory, office or institution. The meetings for these purposes are frequent and lengthy, often with elaborate agendas, which differ from enterprise to enterprise. The manager or director, with the technicians most nearly concerned, meet, on terms of equality, the representatives of every grade

¹ For the Rostov Agricultural Machine Works (*Rostselmash*) we happen to have the figures. Of the 51 members of the factory committee, only 24 were, in 1932, members of the Communist Party. Much the same proportion was found in the 32 shop committees, and among the 400 trade union officials (mostly unpaid).

in the establishment. Often more striking to our western eyes than a factory meeting is the administration, by such a committee (*mestkom*) of a non-industrial institution. We ourselves attended, during our voyage, a meeting of the "ship's soviet", belonging to the Seafarers' Trade Union, at which the captain laid the ship's accounts before the meeting of the entire crew and explained the items. One of the electricians presided, and all sections of the ship's company, including several women, were represented. As the accounts indicated a loss on the voyage, various criticisms were made on the expenses. One sailor asked why the ships used such a costly wharfage site on the Thames. The captain replied that it was worth the rent to be so near the butter market. One of the stewards asked why such a high speed had been maintained on the last voyage; only to be told that a better price was expected for the cargo if it could reach the Thames before a specified day. Many other questions and answers followed. It was impossible not to be impressed with the educational value of the discussion, as well as by the complete sense of comradeship among all ranks, and the feeling of being engaged in a common task.

We add another sample, in an account by an American nurse, of an ordinary meeting of the Medical Workers' Union in a Leningrad hospital. "The routine meetings of these unions are apt to be vivid occasions, with a picturesque red-kerchiefed laundry worker in the chair, a woman doctor graduated from the Sorbonne as recording secretary, and committees including the tolerant, humorous-eyed director of the institution, who may have been a famous specialist fifteen years ago, an excitable young doctor who is equally enthusiastic for communism and for medical research, a sleepy stove-man whose high boots reek of poorly cured leather, and several rows of whispering, stolid nurses and orderlies. The meetings last long into the night, as much of the detailed administration of the hospital or clinic is discussed and decided here. Complicated technical details have to be put into slow and simple language, a process often exacting heavy toll from the patience of the nimble-witted doctors, but when the session is at last over there has usually been worked out a rather remarkable understanding of the situation, together with the intelligent cooperation of different groups among the staff. These union meetings are a real school of democracy."¹

The Trade Union Factory Committee

The trade union factory (FZK) or institution committee (*fabkom* or *mestkom*) of between 5 and 50 members, has important, varied and continuous functions. Its plenum meetings may not be more frequent than once a quarter,² but it always elects annually a president and secretary, who in all the larger units generally give their whole time to trade union

¹ *Health Work in Soviet Russia*, by Anna J. Haines, p. 33.

² In the large industrial plants the committees of the various shops, shifts or brigades, to which reference has already been made, usually meet three or four times a month, independently of the meetings of the *fabkom*.

work ; and a presidium of half a dozen to a dozen members, which usually meets every week or two.¹ It undertakes, as regards all those employed in the factory, office or institution, the detailed administration of the various branches of social insurance ; the arrangements for sending workers to convalescent or holiday homes ; the management of the factory club, the factory canteen or dining-rooms, and any factory cultural undertakings, and even the allocation among the workers of theatre and concert tickets placed at their disposal. For any or all of these duties separate commissions may be appointed, on which trade union members not elected to the factory committee may be asked to serve.² The officers and presidium of the committee are in constant relations with the management of the factory, office or institute, over which they have no actual control, but which must always inform the factory committee of proposed changes, discuss with them any of the workers' grievances, hear their suggestions, and generally consult with them as to the possibility of increasing the output, lessening waste and diminishing cost. It is the factory committee which organises shock brigades, and, on behalf of the workers, enters into "socialist competition" with other factories, offices or institutions, as to which can achieve the most during a given period.

Collective Bargaining in the USSR

The soviet trade unions play such a large part in social administration, and have so many different functions, that the foreign observer is apt to underestimate the amount and the importance of their work in collective bargaining. Far from there being less collective bargaining in the USSR than in Great Britain or the United States, or in Germany before the Hitlerite dictatorship, there is actually very much more than in any other country in the world. To make this clear we must anticipate what will be explained in greater detail in our subsequent chapter entitled "Planned Production for Community Consumption".

In the USSR, as in every country in which trade unionism has passed from the stage of small local combinations to that of national unions comprising whole industries, the standard time-rates in each industry are settled, not by the several establishments or localities in which the industry is carried on, but in negotiations between committees representing respectively the whole of the workers and the whole of the managements in the country. So far as concerns the basic rates of time wages in each

¹ Among the usual subcommittees or commissions under the factory committee are those (1) for the protection of workers and the promotion of their health, including safeguarding of machinery, housing, day nurseries, rest-houses, etc. ; (2) for "cultural-educational matters", including technical classes, libraries, wall newspapers, theatre tickets, etc. ; (3) wage assessments and disputes ; (4) production, including all possible improvements in productivity ; (5) auditing ; (6) finance ; (7) international workers' relief ; (8) cooperative society ; (9) club management, and often many others.

² Those who give their whole time to trade union duties receive from trade union funds salaries equal to their earnings in the factory. All others are allowed "time off", without any objection by the management, without loss of pay, to perform any duties for which their fellow-workmen have chosen them.

union, and the coefficient of increase to be applied to these for the ensuing year throughout the whole of soviet industry, this collective bargaining is concentrated, in the main, in one prolonged and manifold discussion, in the early months of each year, between the AUCCTU and the central committees of all the 154 trade unions, on the one hand, and the representatives of the Sovnarkom and the managements of the various trusts and public services on the other. The note in these discussions is not one of conflict and struggle between two hostile parties, each endeavouring to deprive the other of something to which it clings for its own benefit, but rather one of objective examination of the statistical facts and the considerations of public policy, to which both parties agree to defer. "The peculiar feature of the soviet collective agreements", said a trade union representative, "is the absence of the enemy party." It is, indeed, not so much a new rate of wages that has to be determined as the "General Plan" of soviet industry for the ensuing year or years, in which, as will be explained in a subsequent chapter, the amount of wages is only one of several determining factors. The collective bargaining of the trade unions is far from being merely series of tussles between "labour" and "capital", as to the shifting boundary-line between wages and profits. What emerges from the discussions is specific allocation of the entire net product of the community's industry, arrived at by agreement as to the nature and amount of the aggregate sums to be set aside for particular objects of common concern. Although there is no tribute of rent or profit to be abstracted, it is recognised that the whole produce cannot be distributed as "personal wages". A substantial part must annually be devoted not only to repairs and making good the depreciation of plant, but also to the extension of the nation's industry, and the building and equipping of additional mines, factories, ships and railways. This expansion is universally recognised as necessary, not merely to meet the clamorous demand of the workers themselves for additional commodities but also in order to make the USSR as far as possible independent of the hostile capitalist states. There is no limit within view to this effective demand for more goods, and better; and as we shall show, in a subsequent chapter, there is no reason to suppose that any such limit will ever appear. It is, indeed, one of the essential conditions of "Planned Production for Community Consumption" that it provides for the popular demand being always "effective demand", either for commodities and services, or for holidays and a shortening of the hours of labour. But the annual increase of industry is necessarily limited by the forces then and there available, and in particular by the labour power of the ever-increasing population, swollen by the peasants whom the mechanisation of agriculture is constantly dispensing with. Here the statistics annually worked out by the State Planning Commission carry irresistible weight. It is to no one's interest to waste any of the labour force that will be available, and thus allow unemployment to recur. Then there are the necessary "overhead charges" of the nation to be provided for; the cost of all the government

departments, national defence, and the administration of justice, together with a matter in which the workers of the USSR are more keenly interested than those of any other country, namely, scientific exploration and research. Here, too, the calculation is largely a matter of statistics of how much can be immediately undertaken out of the programme already decided on by the people's representatives. Finally there is the total estimated cost of the extensive and ever-expanding social services, including not only the whole educational and "pre-school" system, with all its maintenance scholarships; the far-flung state medical service in its innumerable forms; the endless task of sanitation and rehousing for the whole population; the constantly growing social insurance to which the workers make no individual contribution; the publicly organised provision for physical and mental recreation of every kind, and so on. This whole expenditure—now amounting to about 50 per cent of what the workman draws in cash as his wages—is significantly known as the "socialised wage". It is always the subject of trade union pressure, but of pressure for its increase, notwithstanding the obvious fact that every kopek of increase lessens the balance that is available for distribution as "personal wages". For it is the whole of what remains, after the above-named "cuts" have been made from the estimated product of the year, that the trade unions accept as the lump sum available for the personal wages of the whole aggregate of workers by hand or by brain. It is the amount of this residue divided by the total number of workers that enables the coefficient of increase of standard time wages—the percentage by which last year's wage-rates can be augmented—to be calculated.

Exactly how this aggregate wage-fund shall be shared among the whole army of workers employed at wages or salaries is left, very largely, to be worked out by the central committees of the 154 trade unions, in consultation with their joint body, the All-Union Central Committee of Trade Unions (AUCCTU). We can give here only a brief summary of the way it is done, leaving to our subsequent chapter entitled "In Place of Profit" a fuller exposition alike of principle and practice. It must here suffice to say that the trade unionists in the USSR, after various experiments in the nature of "trial and error", agree in a common system of grading, which is continually being better adjusted to the technical peculiarities and the changing circumstances of the various localities in which each industry is carried on. Separate provision has to be made for the remuneration, on the one hand, of apprentices and other novices, and such indispensable but non-material workers as gatekeepers and clerks; and, on the other, for that of specialist technicians and administrators, all of whom, it will be remembered, are members of the trade union concerned. In all these cases it has become plain to all concerned that the decisive factor is the necessity of attracting to each industry and each locality the necessary "cadres" of each kind of skill and ability. The problem is not one of trying how little the indispensable people can be got for, but of discovering by what inducements and special provision for training the existing

shortage in these "cadres" can be most effectively diminished. Then the main body of manual workers are divided into eight or more grades, as may be found most suited to the industrial processes; grades not according to craft or function, but according to degrees of skill or capacity, very largely based on its relative scarcity. The grades are, in fact, grades of wage-rates; fixed according to what is called "social value", which means, in effect, according to the relative scarcity of any particular kind of capacity to perform the operations required. These graded wage-rates rise by steps from one for the unskilled worker to two, four or eight times that amount per month for different degrees of skill or capacity. Any worker may enter any grade for which he can perform the work. The zealous and ambitious young man in the lowest grade (say grade one) may at any time claim to be promoted to grade two. "Very well," is the response, "you can have a fortnight's trial. If in that time you make good, to the satisfaction of the management and of the trade union official, you will remain in grade two, and draw its higher rate of wage. If not, you will revert to your lower grade." Presently the workman claims to be able to proceed to grade four, when the same procedure is gone through. The result is that a very large proportion of the young workers—in one factory we were told, it ran up to 90 per cent—are found to be voluntarily studying in evening classes (which charge no fees), endeavouring to "improve their qualifications". As there is no risk of unemployment, and as all the workers in each industry are in one and the same union, there are no "demarcation" disputes. As every increase in skill and capacity means increase of output and decrease of "spoilage" or waste, the management, and equally the trade union, has nothing but welcome for its unskilled labourers turning themselves into skilled mechanics, and even into scientifically educated engineers. All that is essential is that the growth of net output should at least keep pace with the increased wage-bill.

So much for the principles and methods by which the collective bargaining over the national wage-rates is conducted. But in all industries, and in every country, the sphere of collective bargaining comprises much more than the national scale of wage-rates. Over all the rest of the field, it is the local organisations of each union in the USSR that enter into protracted discussions with the management of the particular factory in which the members are working. In the first place, there is the perpetual business of fixing the piecework rates for each task or process. Here the national timework rate for each hour's work has to be translated into an equivalent payment for each job, so that any worker accepted for employment, and not subject to any physical disability, should be able, with ordinary diligence, to earn at least the standard rate for each month. What is indispensable in fixing piecework rates is equality as between different tasks or processes. Those workers who work more quickly or more efficiently, than the common man will, with the full approval of the management, and to the eventual advantage of every person in the factory, take home higher earnings, which are amply compensated for

by the increased output by which everybody gains. In the USSR it is the trade union's own official, the rate-fixer for whose training in the principles and practice of rate-fixing the trade union has often paid, who has the initiative and the greatest influence in fixing the piecework rates, on the basis of equality between different jobs, and of equivalence, for the common man of ordinary diligence, of the earnings by time and by the piece. The management has its own officials, who may object to any proposed rate as not conforming to these principles. If the experts on each side cannot agree, the matter goes to arbitration. But, in the USSR, the management has no pecuniary inducement to "cut" the rates!

We have, however, far from completed the exploration of the sphere of collective bargaining in the USSR. For the workman in that land of proletarian dictatorship, the factory is not merely the place in which he earns a toilsome wage. It is very largely the centre of his life. It often provides his dwelling-place and his club, his children's nursery-school and kindergarten, his own and his wife's technical classes, their excursions on free days and their annual vacations, their extensive and varied social insurance. All these things and much else are dealt with by the trade union. What is novel and unexpected is to find them matters of collective bargaining with the factory management, to be provided, wholly or partly by the management itself, as part of the overhead charges of the undertaking, though almost entirely administered by the trade union committees. The foreign observer is surprised to find the safety and amenity of the places of work, the provision of hospital and sanatorium beds, the measures taken for the prevention of accidents, the provision of additional or better dwelling accommodation for the persons employed, the establishment of crèches and kindergartens for the young children; the workmen's clubhouse and the technical classes provided to enable them to improve their qualifications—and many other matters of importance to the workmen's daily life, dealt with in the detailed agreement (*koldogovor*) drawn up annually in March between the management and the various workmen's committees, in time to allow the management to provide, in the budget for the factory operations, the necessary increases in factory expenditure, which have all to find their place in the General Plan. These increases are sometimes considerable. "Four million roubles", we read, "have been granted for workers' housing by the Petrovsk and Lenin metal plant of Dnepropetrovsk, according to the Planning Department of the AUCCTU. Two more children's nurseries will be built. The workers, in turn, agree to increase output 38 per cent. Their wages will go up 24 per cent. Metal workers up to now have occupied the nineteenth place on the wage list. In the present wage revisions they will be elevated to third place."¹ As there are no tributes to private persons of rent or profit out of which these expenses can be drawn, the argument turns on the necessary limits to such a disposal of the aggregate product, and the

¹ Pamphlet by L. Kaufmann (Cooperative Publishing Society of Foreign Workers in USSR, 1932); see *Moscow News*, weekly edition, March 28, 1932.

mutual relation of the shares allotted respectively to these "socialised wages" and the "personal wages".

In these annual discussions with the management of each factory, it is astonishing to see how large is the proportion of the workmen who are drawn in to take part. In March 1932 Shvernik said: "The attendance of workers and employees at the meetings where drafts of the new collective agreements were discussed has, in a number of enterprises, been as high as 95 or 100 per cent. The number of workers who took part in drawing up the collective agreement at the 'Hammer and Sickle' plant amounted to 98.6 per cent; at the Stalingrad Tractor plant, 97 per cent; at the 'Red October', 97 per cent; at the Yaroslav Brake plant, 100 per cent; at the Shinsky Textile plant, 100 per cent."¹ Even if this participation in the collective bargaining, of practically the entire local membership of the trade union, amounts to no more than attendance at the meetings, listening to the speeches, occasionally asking questions, and then unprotestingly adopting a unanimous decision, this must be admitted to be in itself no little political education, and not a bad method of arousing in the rank and file that "consciousness of consent" which is necessary to effective democracy. Moreover, the treaty is never unilateral. "An agreement made by soviet workers", writes a trade union representative, "is in reality a promise they make to themselves and their fellow-workers to fulfil certain self-determined conditions. No outside coercive power exists. . . . In capitalist countries collective agreements are the armistice terms of two hostile forces. In the negotiations the employers strive to force the worst possible conditions on the workers. . . . Here there is no enemy. No one tries to give as little as he can for as much as he can."²

Apart, however, from the annual discussions, there is a great deal of collective bargaining going on throughout the whole year. New determinations of piecework rates have to be made for novel jobs; there may be special bonuses to be given for particular jobs or exceptional service; and there is the inevitable stream of complaints from individual workmen about real or imaginary ill-treatment, expressing discontent with the piecework rates for their particular jobs, or appealing against dismissal or other disciplinary action. Actual suspension of work by a strike is, by this time, practically unknown; but this does not mean that there are no divergences of view between the management and whole groups of workmen. As we have already mentioned, any such dispute is promptly referred to what is popularly termed "the triangle", an arbitration court within the factory, office or institution, formed for each occasion and

¹ Pamphlet by L. Kaufmann (Cooperative Publishing Society of Foreign Workers in USSR, 1932); see *Moscow News*, weekly edition, March 28, 1932.

² Shvernik's speech in *Report of Ninth Trade Union Congress, 1933*, pp. 64-65.

These "koldogovor", or annual agreements between the factory employees and the factory management, are elaborate and lengthy printed documents. That of the "Red Plough" works at Moscow for 1933 ran to 70 pages, 16mo; that of the Electrocombinat to 59 pages; that of the First State Factory of Spare Parts to 44 pages; and that of the Railway Transport Workers Union to 64 pages. We print in the appendix a slightly abbreviated translation of the koldogovor of a large factory at Gorki.

composed of a representative of the management, a leading official of the trade union within the establishment and the local official of the cell or group within the establishment consisting of members of the Communist Party. This informal domestic tribunal almost invariably settles the dispute on common-sense lines, in a way that is accepted by the disputants. Either party could, however, always appeal to the RKK (workers' control commission) on which there sit members of the trade unions as well as officers of the trusts; or, indeed, to the Commissariat (ministry) of Labour of the constituent republic within the territory of which the establishment is situated, and even, ultimately, to the People's Commissar for Labour of the USSR.¹ Now that these People's Commissars, whom the AUCCTU has always nominated, have been superseded by the AUCCTU itself, it is to this highest trade union body that such an appeal would be made.

It is, however, one thing to get the obligations of the management to the workers and those of the workers to the management enshrined in a "koldogovor", or mutual agreement for the year, and quite another thing to get these reciprocal obligations exactly and punctually fulfilled. "There are still", observed Shvernik at the Ninth All-Union Trade Union Congress in 1932, "a number of very real defects in the way of collective agreements to be handled. The most important of these defects is the absence of a systematic method of checking up the fulfilment of the obligations undertaken under the collective agreement both by the workers and by the administration. Many trade union organisations do nothing from year's end to year's end but record the fact that both parties to the agreement have failed to fulfil their obligations, thus limiting their activities to the campaign for the conclusion of a new agreement—a campaign which is conducted but once a year. This sort of thing must be put a stop to once and for all. It should be the everyday duty of all trade union organisations to check up the way the collective agreements are being fulfilled. We must succeed in making both our economic bodies and our trade union organisations fulfil all the obligations of the collective agreement. Only then can the collective agreement become a real weapon in the struggle of the whole working class for the fulfilment of the industrial and financial plan, for raising the productivity of labour and for improving the material and general living conditions of the workers."²

Thus the factory committee has extensive and important duties throughout the year. For all this business, including the desk work and interviewing by its officers, and committee and members' meetings, the enterprise which it serves is required to allocate convenient and properly furnished premises with heating and lighting, all free of charge.³

¹ In 1928-1929 there were still as many as 47 strikes sent up for consideration by the People's Commissar for Labour. In 1929-1930 there were only 7 (*Die russischen Gewerkschaften*, by Michael Jakobson, 1932, p. 164).

In both years the number was insignificant for so vast an area as the USSR, and for so many millions of trade unionists, employed in ten or fifteen thousand separate establishments.

² Shvernik's speech in *Report of Ninth Trade Union Congress, 1932*, pp. 64-65.

³ The Labour Code of 1932, section 15, ordains that "the management of the undertaking, institution or enterprise shall grant the committee (fabkom) the use of a room free

The factory committee, by means of volunteer "dues-collectors" collects the trade union contributions of the whole of the trade union members within the factory, office or institution. These contributions—at one time paid by the management as a charge on the undertaking—are now fixed by the highest delegate congress of each union, and may include extra subscriptions for special funds for educational activities, various sorts of "mutual aid" and sundry voluntary associations, to which only a part of the trade union members belong.¹ By new regulation of the AUCCTU, dating from September 1, 1933, the trade union dues have been universally reduced to a fixed one per cent of wages, whilst the number and amount of other contributions are cut down to a minimum. Trade union members may belong to several societies, but may not pay subscriptions to more than two.² Membership dues are now universally collected by the sale of stamps to be affixed to the members' trade union cards.

of charge, with the necessary equipment, heating and lighting, both for the business of the committee itself and for general and delegate meetings".

¹ "Where the system of individual payment of contributions is in force (now nearly universal) it is generally considered necessary to have one collector [presumably thus engaged only after his day's work] for every 20 or 30 members. The collector makes one round a month. Besides the trade union contributions properly so called, he also collects other contributions (clubs, mutual aid societies, various associations) and gives a temporary receipt to the payer, whose account book he takes and transfers to the factory committee concerned. The factory committee subsequently issues official receipts for the payments made. In many organisations, however, these arrangements work badly; in certain cases, in order to simplify the work of the collectors, proposals and experiments have been made in paying contributions by means of stamps specially issued for the purpose" (*The Trade Union Movement in Soviet Russia*, I.L.O., League of Nations, 1927, p. 82).

It took a long time to put on a proper footing all trade unions and in all parts of the USSR the system of individual payment of trade union dues, in substitution of the former system of automatic deductions from wages. Not until the Seventh All-Union Congress of Trade Unions (1926) could it be reported as completed. The scale then fixed was 30 kopeks per month for all receiving not exceeding 25 roubles per month earnings, rising gradually to 10 roubles per month on earnings exceeding 400 roubles per month. The trade union may, with the consent of the All-Union Congress of the particular union (AZRG), add a supplement not raising the total contribution to more than 4 per cent of the highest grade of earnings. This supplement is often from one-half per cent to two per cent of the monthly earnings, and is usually devoted to the expenses of the fabkom or mestkom. Of the regular dues, 10 per cent is usually allocated for the expenses of the lateral or inter-union organisations, whilst the remainder provides for the upper stages of the vertical hierarchy, particularly the All-Union Congress of each trade union, and the central committee which it elects (ZK). There are often small special funds for cultural activities, and (now less frequent) for unemployment and the occasional small strikes (*Die russischen Gewerkschaften*, by Michael Jakobson, 1932, p. 127; *Soviet Trade Unions*, by Robert W. Dunn, 1928, p. 70).

² Resolutions of the TSIK, Sovnarkom and VTSSPS of August 16, 1933: see *Izvestia*, August 17, 1933. Trade union members' dues to the Communist Party (to which between one and two millions of them belong) were at the same time fixed as under:

20 kopeks on a wage or salary up to 100 roubles			
60	"	"	of 101 to 150 roubles
1 rouble	"	"	" 150 to 200 "
1-50 roubles	"	"	" 201 to 250 "
2	"	"	" 251 to 300 "
2 per cent	"	"	" 301 to 500 "
3	"	"	" above 500 "

Not without warrant can it be claimed by an American observer that "the trade union fabkom is a growing force in the Soviet Union. It brings workers not only into the unions, but into the whole economic activity of the country. It is the principal organ of workers' democracy in a government and an industrial system operated by and for workers. In no other country does this type of workers' council have so much power. . . . In no other country does it have such varied and important functions. Nowhere do its members have so much freedom and responsibility as in the USSR. It acts as the fundamental contact point through which the worker begins to take part in factory as well as in social life, to exercise his rights as a worker in this community; and to participate in building up the nationalised industries."¹

The Regional Council of the Trade Union

The next stage to the factory committee in each trade union hierarchy in all but the smaller unions is now the regional council, representing all the establishments belonging to the particular trade union within a particular area, which is generally coterminous with the soviet area of the oblast, or in the case of the largest cities, with the city itself, but is sometimes demarcated so as to correspond more conveniently with the geographical distribution of the establishments belonging to the union.² Altogether there are, among the hundred larger trade unions, approximately 900 regional councils.

The trade union regional council is elected by a delegate meeting representing the factory committees of all the establishments belonging to that particular trade union within the region. This delegate meeting meets as a plenum very infrequently, and usually only when it has to elect its president and secretary, who always give their whole time to their trade union work, with a presidium of half a dozen members, for whose desk-work and meetings the regional council of each trade union maintains everywhere its own regional office.

¹ *Soviet Trade Unions*, by Robert W. Dunn, 1928, p. 45.

² It was laid down at the Second Trade Union Congress in 1919 that "the type of organisation which best corresponds to the fundamental duties of the trade union movement must embody All-Russian central unions, with sections and sub-sections in the provinces (linked up by inter-trade union councils based on the formation of the All-Russian council and factory committees, or employees' committees in non-industrial undertakings). The territorial division into sections and sub-sections is to be determined by the central organ of the All-Russian trade union concerned, and every attention is to be given to the geographical distribution and numerical importance of the various industrial groups. At the same time the division into groups must correspond as far as possible with the administrative areas of the country" (*The Trade Union Movement in Soviet Russia*, International Labour Office, League of Nations, 1927, p. 57).

We gather that in each trade union the subsectional council has been abandoned and the sectional councils are now styled regional councils, above which there are, in the smaller constituent republics, for some of the trade unions, republic councils, which (together with the regional councils of the RSFSR) elect an All-Union Congress of the particular trade union (AZRG), from which a central committee for the union (ZK) is chosen.

In the reorganisation of 1934, so far as concerns the 49 smaller unions, the regional council has gone the way of the subsectional council, thus bringing the central committee of each of these unions in immediate contact with all its fabkoms or mestkoms.

The most interesting function of the regional council of each trade union and one to which we shall presently refer may be that of entering into lateral relations with the other unions within the region.

The Republic Council of each Trade Union

The highest stage of the trade union hierarchies within the six smaller constituent republics (not in the RSFSR) is the congress of delegates elected, in the hundred or so larger unions, by all the regional councils which the particular union has within the area of the republic; and in the forty-nine smaller unions which have no regional councils by the factory or institution committees. Such trade unions may thus enjoy several "republic" congresses, being one for each of the smaller constituent republics in which the particular trade union has a considerable and completely organised membership.

*The All-Union Congress of each Trade Union*¹

Each trade union has still to create its central organ for the administration of the affairs of its whole USSR membership from the Baltic to the Pacific. Each trade union accordingly has its own "All-Union" congress, formed of delegates chosen by its several congresses of the highest grade, in the RSFSR those of the regions, whether cities or oblasts or, in the six smaller republics, those of the constituent republics over which its own membership is spread. This All-Union delegate congress (AZRG), which varies in size according to the magnitude of the aggregate membership of the trade union, meets usually only every other year for a few days' general discussion and for the election of a standing central council (ZK) and of the usual president, secretary and presidium, by whom the supreme administration of the trade union is practically conducted. It is this authority by which, in close consultation with the USSR joint trade union organ still to be described (AUCCTU), are arranged the dozen or two grades of wage-rates applicable to as many grades of workers, among which, with some local variations and various exceptional cases, the entire membership of the trade union finds itself working. Moreover, it is this All-Union authority for each trade union that, in similar close consultation, actually conducts on behalf of its entire membership between the Baltic and the Pacific—so far as concerns the standard wage-rates in the several trade unions; the coefficient of increase to be adopted for the ensuing year, and the aggregate of wages and salaries in the USSR—the collective bargaining between the trade union and the organs representing the Sovnarkom of People's Commissars for the USSR, together with Gosplan, and the various trusts directing the nationalised industries. It was authoritatively laid down in 1932 that "the central committees of the unions must concentrate their efforts primarily upon questions of regulating wages and settling rates and categories, upon the organisation of

¹ The term "All-Union" invariably means the whole of the USSR; never all trade unions.

labour and production, upon housing construction, upon the improvement of the working and living conditions of their members" ¹

But although this hierarchy of trade union councils, from the brigade or shift or shop, through the factory or institution committees, and the regional councils, right up to the trade union authorities of each republic and those for the whole of the USSR, undoubtedly serves to unite the whole membership of each union, and to concentrate its final influence, it must not be supposed that there is any corresponding dissipation of authority in the settlement of policy. It was quite definitely laid down by the Ninth All-Union Congress of Trade Unions that "the republican, regional and district councils of trade unions, while not renouncing responsibility for problems of wages, production, etc., must give up the duplication and replacement of union organisation, and *concentrate their major attention upon checking the fulfilment of the directives of the Party, the government and the All-Union Central Committee of Trade Unions (AUCCTU)*" ²

The All-Union Congress of Trade Unions

There is, it will be seen, yet a higher and in some ways even more important body than the supreme USSR authority for each trade union, namely, a congress acting, not for one union only, but for the whole of the 154 unions, and for their aggregate membership throughout the USSR. This joint congress, the authority for soviet trade unionism as a whole, is made up of a couple of thousand delegates elected approximately in proportion to trade union membership, by the several congresses, whether regional or republic or All-Union, of the 154 trade unions, or rather by their highest elected committees. This All-Union Trade Union Congress meets only every other year, for general discussion and for the election of an All-Union Central Committee of Trade Unions (AUCCTU), and of the invariable president, secretary and presidium.

The All-Union Congress of Trade Unions is, however, no mere parade, but a live forum of popular discussion. We quote a description by an American observer in 1926. "Walk into a congress of Russian workers, the last (seventh) All-Union Congress of the AUCCTU for example. One finds about 1500 delegates present. They are not, as in many countries, all the representatives of the central committees of national unions. In fact all of them were elected at provincial congresses, and two-thirds of them are men and women from the provinces. About one-sixth of them have come directly from the lathe and the loom and the plough. Only one-sixth are officials from the higher ranks of the national unions, who have been selected at provincial congresses. Some thirty-three nationalities are represented, and nearly one hundred women delegates are present." ³

But important and influential as may be the discussions at the All-Union Congress of Trade Unions, the fact that it meets only every other

¹ *Report of Ninth All-Union Congress of Trade Unions, 1932*, p. 386.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Soviet Trade Unions*, by Robert W. Dunn, 1928, p. 162.

year necessarily throws all its powers into the hands of the central committee (AUCCTU) that it elects. Although this central committee itself meets as a plenum only every few months,¹ the officers, instructed and supervised by the presidium, and giving their whole time to the work, are almost continuously engaged throughout the year, largely in dealing with minor issues that arise between the different unions, and in adjusting differences and divergences likely to become injurious or acute. But the most important function of these inter-union officers is to centralise and supervise the collective bargaining between the central representatives of the several trade unions and the committees and officials representing the Sovnarkom (or Cabinet) of People's Commissars, Gosplan, and the various state trusts and other enterprises, especially in the annual settlement, and the continuous detailed adjustment, of the General Plan. It was this body, for instance, that made the momentous collective agreement with the Supreme Economic Council in September 1931, for the fundamental remodelling of the wage scales in the coal and iron and steel industries, by which the difference between the earnings of skilled and unskilled workers was greatly enlarged and the higher grades were better remunerated, as a means of increasing the total productivity.² It is, in fact, this body as the repository of the power conveyed from the (literally) millions of members' meetings all over the USSR, through the whole hierarchy of councils of each of the 154 gigantic trade unions, that exercises the effective government of the trade union movement. "The All-Union Central Committee of Trade Unions (AUCCTU)", it was authoritatively declared, "must base all its work directly upon the work of the central committees of the trade unions, furnishing them with concrete aid, and constantly checking and providing concrete leadership for their activity. . . ." "The congress instructs the AUCCTU to take all necessary measures toward improving financial discipline, insisting on prompt payment of membership dues, and improving the financial relations between the central committees of the trade unions and the AUCCTU, in the direction of increasing independence of the industrial unions."³

¹ There were six plenums of the AUCCTU between the Eighth All-Union Trade Union Congress in 1928-1929 and the Ninth All-Union Trade Union Congress in 1931, during a most important period of reorganisation.

The plenum was, in 1934, directed to meet regularly every two months. Its membership was at the same time reduced from 502 to 338, in spite of the division of the 47 trade unions into as many as 154.

² *New Methods of Work, New Methods of Leadership*, by J. Grabe (Cooperative Publishing Society of Foreign Workers in USSR, Moscow, 1933), p. 31.

³ *Report of Ninth All-Union Congress of Trade Unions, 1932*, p. 387. A recent development of the AUCCTU has been the formation of a "Foreign Bureau" (Insnab) in order to maintain a closer contact with the foreign workers employed in the USSR and to investigate their complaints. Such a trade union Foreign Bureau exists actively in Moscow and is supposed to exist in every trade union District or City Council in which there are foreign workers with an "Insnab Control Commission" elected by the foreign workers themselves. These are not to interfere with the functions of other trade union organisations, but to bring the foreign workers into closer contact with these organisations, and to see to it that all their grievances are promptly dealt with (*Moscow Daily News*, May 10, 1932).

The work of the AUCCTU in 1934 was reorganised into 9 departments, namely:

And the AUCCTU does not hesitate to strike hard when it is necessary. When the Central Committee of the Union of Workers in the Sugar Industry had allowed the organisation of that union to go to pieces, and had failed altogether to prevent all sorts of malpractices in the state farms of Soyuzsakhhar, where so many of its members were employed, the AUCCTU itself discovered what was going on. The presidium of the AUCCTU presented a damning report to the plenum of the Central Committee of the Union of Workers in the Sugar Industry, in which a drastic change in leadership was demanded. The members of the union plenum were convinced, and substituted a new presidium for that which had so hopelessly failed.¹

Lateral Structure in USSR Trade Unionism

So far we have described only the vertical hierarchy of the trade unions, by which the stream of power may be said to pass from the 186,640 factory and local committees (fabkom and mestkom), elected in the innumerable members' meetings, right up to the 154 central committees of the several unions and the single central committee representing all of them, the AUCCTU—there to be transformed into the authority by which the whole eighteen million trade unionists between the Baltic and the Pacific are governed. We have, however, yet to notice the equally elaborate lateral structure at each stage of the vertical hierarchy, by means of which the activities of the various trade union committees within each local area are coordinated, and inter-union conflicts are avoided. The factory and local committees (fabkom and mestkom) of the establishments belonging to one trade union within the area of a city or a district may send delegates to a city or district committee for that particular trade union. But such an organisation will deal only with matters relating to the one trade union, and is not universal. What is universal, in every large city and every industrialised district outside the cities, is a district trade union council, formed of delegates, either from the city or district committees of particular trade unions where such exist, or, more usually, from the factory or local committees (fabkom and mestkom) of all the establishments within the area, to whatsoever trade unions they belong. There seem to be nearly 3000 of such inter-union district or city councils in the USSR. In this way, something analogous to the organisation of the local trades councils of the British trade union movement is formed, dealing, however, not with municipal politics, which occupy so large a proportion of the attention of the British trades councils, but almost entirely with trade union matters. When it is remembered that nearly all the 154 soviet trade unions include some workers of the same craft or vocation—whether general labourers or unspecialised clerks; or such craftsmen as carpenters, engineers and electricians common to nearly all

(1) Responsible Instructors or Organisers; (2) Planning of Wages; (3) Bureau of Social Insurance; (4) Labour Inspection; (5) Clubs and Cultural Work; (6) Accounting; (7) Finance; (8) General Administration; and (9) Physical Culture.

¹ *Report of Ninth All-Union Congress of Trade Unions, 1933, p. 27.*

industries; or professional specialists such as doctors and nurses—and that these are incessantly moving from one establishment to another, frequently thus transferring to other trade unions, it will be seen that innumerable questions must arise between them.

These lateral connections exist at each stage of the trade union hierarchy. There are about 70 republic or regional councils of the various trade unions, having each its own office with its own officials. In some of the republics at least (as in the Ukraine) this organisation (OVWR) exists for combined action of all the trade unions within the particular constituent republic.

The Trade Union Officials

So extensive an organisation, operating over so vast a territory, naturally requires a considerable army of officials. As we have already indicated, the bulk of the work of collecting the subscriptions, managing the elections and administering the local business, is performed voluntarily without remuneration by duly elected unpaid officers and committee men, possibly as many as a million in number, in their leisure hours. But in every industrial establishment of any magnitude, trade unionism requires the whole-time service of one or more experienced officials, to whom the union pays salaries approximately equal to the earnings of skilled mechanics. The lateral inter-union organisations, as well as the central committee of each union, employ whole staffs of similar officials. It is, however, the work of the most important body, the All-Union Central Committee of Trade Unions (AUCCTU), that calls for the most extensive and responsible civil service. It is in this part of the trade union bureaucracy that the scheme of reorganisation of 1934 has wrought the greatest changes. In its relations with all the unions, the AUCCTU had gradually developed an elaborate "functionalism", each branch of the work having its own specialised officials, by whose written communications and personal visits the fabkoms and mestkoms were being perpetually harassed. In 1934 Shvernik got adopted a reform by which these specialised or "functional" officials were wholly replaced by a single service of "instructors"—who in England would be termed organisers or inspectors—who are to be for all purposes the channel of communication between the central body on the one hand and both the separate trade unions and the innumerable fabkoms or mestkoms on the other. Henceforth it will be these trained "instructors" who will both supervise or inspect the work of the 154 unions and their local organs, and convey to them the criticisms or "directives" of the AUCCTU. In the larger unions the central committees will have, in addition, their own staff of similar "instructors", assisting and controlling their various branches and local committees in all the details of their work. The colossal industrial establishments, having each tens of thousands of members, may even find "instructors" permanently assigned to each of them. This far-reaching reconstruction of the trade union civil service, by which it is hoped to economise in the total numbers employed, will plainly make more effective the influence

of the central body representing all the 154 unions, as well as that over the local organs exercised by the central committee of each union. The reform may be expected to bring to the assistance of the local administrators the advantage of consistency in policy, and the lessons of a larger experience than any one of them can command. But how far this increasing centralisation of authority will increase trade union efficiency as a whole must be left to experience to reveal.

The Transference of the Commissariat of Labour to the Trade Unions

With the growth of trade union membership to eighteen millions, the work falling on the trade union administrators had become colossal. It was destined to be still further increased. In 1933 a momentous addition was made to the trade union business: by a decision and decree of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and the Central Executive Committee (TSIK) of the All-Union Congress of Soviets, the office of the USSR People's Commissar of Labour together with those of the People's Commissars of Labour of all the constituent and autonomous republics were summarily abolished. Practically all the functions of these commissariats were transferred to the All-Union Congress of Trade Unions, and to its elected Central Committee of Trade Unions (AUCCTU), with its subordinate hierarchy of committees and officials. The duties thus transferred from the soviet part of the constitution to the trade union part are of considerable magnitude and importance. They include the supreme direction of all branches of social insurance; the whole responsibility for factory inspection; the provision and management of the rest-houses and convalescent homes enjoyed by the trade union membership, with the farming enterprises for their "self-supply" that have lately been developed; and, in supersession of the labour exchanges, now abolished along with involuntary unemployment, the organisation of all labour recruiting for the constantly expanding industries.

This constitutional change is a remarkable recognition of the position that trade unionism holds in the soviet state. The magnitude of the funds, outside the members' subscriptions, which will now be administered by the trade union organisation is impressive. The social insurance budget for 1933 totalled 4432 million roubles, levied by a contribution upon every kind of enterprise of $1\frac{1}{2}$ or 2 per cent of its wage-total; and providing 814 million roubles for sickness, 532 millions for old-age and infirmity pensions, 203 millions for rest-homes, 35 millions for dietetic restaurants for the sick, 930 millions for hospitals, 189 millions for crèches and 600 millions for workmen's dwellings. These services, moreover, are growing by leaps and bounds. The 1934 budget of the All-Union Central Committee of Trade Unions (AUCCTU), *without including the expenditure of the 154 trade unions themselves upon their accustomed functions*, amounted to no less than 5050 million roubles. It provided 1514 million roubles in sick pay and invalidity pensions; 1040 millions in repayment of the cost of medical services and hospitals; 57 million roubles for special diets for

sick workers ; 215 millions for their rest-houses ; 327 millions for nursery schools and kindergartens to set the mothers free for industrial service ; 750 millions for education ; 885 millions for workers' dwellings ; 41 millions for factory inspection ; 50 millions for insurance administration ; and 170 millions for the necessary working balance or reserve. The corresponding budget for 1935 amounted to no less than 6079 million roubles. The administration of such extensive services—in which, be it noted, the trade unions act as organisations of consumers or users of the services, not as producers—throws a great work on their active members, even more onerous and responsible than their previous duties in the administration of the wage agreements.¹

This vast addition to the work and influence of the soviet trade unions has been curiously misunderstood in some quarters, as a degradation of their position to nothing more than friendly societies ! But the trade unions retain and continue to exercise all the influence and authority in the administration of the factory and in the settlement of wages that they have possessed for the past fifteen years. The new control over social insurance and the entire administration of funds and services of such magnitude can hardly fail to strengthen the trade unions in their work of raising the standard of life of the workers, and even to knit more closely together their far-flung membership.

Those foreign critics, on the other hand, who are appalled at the idea of handing over to the trade unions such vast funds, not derived from the contributions of their members, may, we think, be reassured. The constitutional change, important as it is, will not make so much difference to the administration of social insurance as might be imagined by those conversant only with the constitutions of western Europe or America. It is not, for instance, in any way comparable to the abolition, in the United Kingdom, of the Minister of Labour, and the transfer of his functions, with regard to unemployment insurance and wages boards, to the British Trade Union Congress and its General Council ! The People's Commissar for Labour was, it is true, in every republic and in the USSR itself, a member of the Sovnarkom, and thus, as we should say, a Cabinet Minister. But he had long been appointed on the nomination of the AUCCTU, with whom he was always in the closest relations.² Thus the change

¹ The transfer was accompanied by a great change in the machinery for payment of the cash benefits. Each trade union has now its own head paying and accounting office, dealing through its branches exclusively with its own members. There are, accordingly, more than 150,000 pay stations. At the same time each union became responsible for the continuous "inspection" of its members on benefit, in order to prevent abuse. This has involved the appointment of 80,000 members as inspectors, many of whom have not yet become efficient.

² Moreover, the officials of the Commissariat of Labour have long been nominated by the trade unions. "The trade union councils of the various republics select the labour commissar for their area of their respective congresses. All lower officials of the labour commissariat are likewise selected by the corresponding subordinate trade union body. The local trade union council selects the labour inspectors, who must be trade union members, and the sanitary and technical inspectors employed by the Commissariat of Labour. These inspectors work in close cooperation with the trade unions and report to

might even be taken to involve, in one of its aspects, the exclusion of a direct representative of trade unionism from the highest councils of the state. The actual work of the Commissariat for Labour, voluminous in magnitude and detailed in its nature, has long been dealt with in an extensive official department, which must necessarily continue in existence. What has been transferred is the supervision and direction of this department, for which a responsible chief is now appointed by the AUCCTU, instead of being only nominated by that body for inclusion in the Sovnarkom. In the various constituent and autonomous republics there has been a corresponding transfer of direction and authority, from a local official partly responsible to the People's Commissar for Labour at Moscow, to the highest organ of each trade union within the area, whose chief official will, we assume, have a like double responsibility, to his own trade union by which he is appointed, and to the director at Moscow appointed by the AUCCTU.¹ The change accordingly represents a great increase of responsibility for trade unionism in the USSR, without, necessarily, any great alteration in current administration. The practical abolition of involuntary unemployment in the USSR, which we shall describe in a subsequent chapter, and the consequent cessation of unemployment benefit, probably renders the change less open to criticism than other countries might be disposed to imagine.

The Office-work of USSR Trade Unionism

No one can adequately realise the magnitude, the ubiquity or the activity of this complicated trade union organisation who has not seen something of its work in different cities of the USSR. Yet so vast is the

their congresses. The unions are well represented in the social insurance departments throughout the country. All labour legislation, including all laws which affect labour in any way, is drawn up in consultation with the trade unions" (*The Soviet Worker*, by J. Freeman, 1932, p. 122).

¹ See *New Functions of the Soviet Trade Unions : the Merger of the People's Commissariat of Labour in the AUCCTU*, by N. Shvernik, 1933.

An experienced American observer refers to this change in the following terms : " With very little ado and practically no press comment, an edict has merged the Commissariat of Labour into the All-Soviet Trade Unions, so that control of the many-billion-rouble social-insurance fund, the sanatoria, rest-homes, all workers' medical services, and the protection of labour passes from the hands of the government to the trade unions. Thus, formally at least, the process by which, under socialism, the state dies a slow death through attrition has advanced another step. Back in 1920, Trotsky advocated a reverse development : the suppression of the unions and the organisation of official labour battalions. Nevertheless, as usual, some foreign observers have styled the recent Soviet decree a ' Trotskyist move '. Professional anti-Trotskyists, on the other hand, viewing the 1920 Lenin-Trotsky trade union controversy in the new light of Italian and German fascism, find ideological points of contact between the Duce, Hitler and the sage of Prinkipo. While these salon polemics rage, we shall wait to see whether the latest change, which gives the unions broader functions, also gives them greater independence " (" Russia's Last Hard Year ", by Louis Fischer, in *The Nation* (New York), July 12, 1933).

It is interesting to the constitutional student to find this decree was signed not only by M. Kalinin, as president of the Central Executive Committee (TSIK), and V. Molotov, as president of the Sovnarkom, but also by N. Shvernik, as secretary of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions (AUCCTU). See the text in *Moscow Daily News*, September 17, 1933.

area that no one person can catch more than a glimpse. We may appreciate something of the volume of the work when we learn that the aggregate number of salaried full-time officials in the service of the 154 trade unions, and of their joint or federal bodies, throughout the USSR, in spite of the attempt of the AUCCTU to reduce the number of this salaried bureaucracy, exceeds 30,000, whilst the number of unpaid or part-time officials, apart from members of committees, is estimated to amount to at least ten times as many. We add something to the definiteness of the impression when we merely look at the structural accommodation that has had to be provided for their offices and meetings. It was, we think, a wise statesmanship that saw to it that the whole trade union organisation should be decently housed at the public cost.¹ For every structural requirement of the trade union work within each establishment, whether factory, office or institution, the establishment itself has to provide, as we have mentioned, free of charge, including rooms for permanent office use, and others transiently for members' meetings, with lighting, heating and ordinary furniture. But all the couple of hundred thousand district, regional, republic and central committees and councils and All-Union congresses require offices and meeting-halls. These have been provided free of charge, and a free telephone service added, by the Soviet Government itself, in one or other of its grades, or by one or other of its departments. We do not think it is usually understood how greatly the efficiency of trade unionism may be increased, and its very character raised to the height of a service of public utility, merely by the provision of structural accommodation equal in dignity to that of a government department, in which all the several unions in each locality may be worthily housed together. The Soviet Government was fortunate in finding in its hands, in every city, an array of deserted buildings suitable for this purpose. Among the very first acts of Lenin's administration was the assignment to the trade union movement of some of the best and stateliest of the buildings left derelict by the flight of the nobility and the wealthy. At Leningrad and Moscow the splendid palaces of the nobles' clubs and similar magnificent premises were thus transferred to new uses, rightly regarded as of public character. In other cities, great and small, the best available buildings, previously used as residences of the rich merchants or manufacturers, or as clubs or hotels for their use, or as boarding-schools for their daughters, were, between 1918 and 1920, similarly converted into central trade union offices for the locality. All around these cities we find suburban or rural homes, once occupied by capitalist families, now placed gratuitously at the disposal of the trade unions, and used, either as convalescent homes on medical order or as rest-homes, by their tens of thousands of members on their weekly rest days or their annual holidays. No less remarkable is the accommodation provided for the trade unions

¹ Exceptionally, in the densely peopled industrial district of the Donets Basin, where few wealthy people had deigned to live, the coal-miners' trade union has built for itself a dozen "labour temples" (*Soviet Trade Unions*, by Robert W. Dunn, 1928, pp. 2-3).

in the smaller cities. At Vinitza, in the Ukraine, an obscure city of 11,000 inhabitants, an American observer¹ found the trade union offices occupying the whole of the tallest building in the city, and the only one with six stories, formerly the best hotel; and subsequently discovered this to be "fairly typical of Labour Palaces throughout the Soviet Union. . . . Every room housed some busy trade union branch, some department of union life—the offices of the 23 unions of the district as well as the local trades council; the district social insurance department, with union appointees in charge of it; a dining-room; the workers' students section; the educational department; a library; committee rooms and a meeting-hall. We found union members coming to the building in connection with all sorts of matters touching their daily lives—rents, jobs, dues, insurance, vacation allowances, cooperatives, doctors' permits, transportation, rest-home recommendations, scholarships and the scores of needs and benefits that are somehow related to union membership in the USSR."

The Shock Brigades and Cost Accounting Committees

The work of the trade unions is greatly assisted by a number of subsidiary organisations. In nearly every industrial establishment of any magnitude there have been formed one or more "shock brigades", the members of which (udarniki) are recruited from volunteers among the trade unionists. These shock brigades take as their function the acceleration of production, coupled with improvement in quality and lessening of cost. They undertake collectively special tasks in their own establishment, or they may volunteer to go to some other establishment which has fallen behind. They bring to their work exceptional energy, speed or skill; they labour more assiduously than is common; or they put in extra time in subbotniki (voluntary work). They do this out of zeal, for which they receive honour and applause. They seldom or never have a higher wage-rate and usually no extra bonus, though when working by the piece their increased output automatically brings higher earnings. They often receive preference in the allocation of places in the holiday rest-houses, and, where necessary, in the convalescent homes, as well as in the distribution of the theatre tickets allotted to their trade union. They are put forward as candidates for the factory committee or for the local soviet. The outstanding ones may be awarded the Order of the Red Banner. And as an expression of the honour and applause which are spontaneously accorded to them, they are often given their meals in a separate apartment of the factory restaurant, in a comfortable, quiet privacy, with the highest grade of rations, and such little amenities as tablecloths and flowers, and occasionally special dainties.² Of these shock brigaders, or udarniki, there are reported to be, in the USSR, many millions.

A special application of shock brigading began early in 1931 when a

¹ *Soviet Trade Unions*, by Robert W. Dunn, 1928, p. 2.

² *Die russischen Gewerkschaften*, by Michael Jakobson, 1932, p. 147.

foundry worker in the great "Lenin" factory at Leningrad suggested in a letter to *Trud*, the weekly journal of the AUCCTU, which has a circulation of several hundred thousands, the advisability of "narrowing down the work of the brigade to certain specific tasks or operations", with the definite intention of lessening cost by improvements in method, following on the adoption of precise cost accounting. The project was energetically pushed by *Trud*, and was presently approved by the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions.¹ It spread like wildfire. Within a couple of years there had been formed, in the USSR, no fewer than 150,000 cost accounting brigades, which are reported to have effected a whole series of improvements in the methods of working, by which the production costs of thousands of different articles have been appreciably reduced.²

This spontaneous development of an elementary form of "costing", by which a particular brigade discovers the cost in material and labour time of each part of its own process, and is thus enabled to discover where time might be economised and "scrap" diminished, is, in the USSR, as in most of capitalist industry, only just beginning to be applied by comparative costings of every process in all the establishments turning out the same product. This, we gather, is being taken up in the statistical branch of Gosplan, now transformed into a Cost Accounting Department.

In January 1933 there was an "All-Union Udamnik Day" at Moscow, when about 80,000 shock brigaders, from about 120 separate industries or trades throughout the USSR, were brought together to be fêted and exhorted, and incidentally to confer among themselves as to the shortcomings still characteristic of soviet production, and how these can best be made good. In preparation for this great celebration, the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions (AUCCTU) had directed the trade union committees everywhere to call together the various shock brigades and cost accounting committees in each establishment, which were not only to sum up their achievements and to talk over their plans for the ensuing year, but also to designate for special honours (including portrait painting, and exhibition at the cinemas) their own leading udamniki. The All-Union Council wanted reported to this Moscow celebration "the state of labour-productivity, labour discipline, socialist competition and shock work, and cost accounting brigades. They should determine whether the

¹ *Moscow Daily News*, June 23, 1932.

² "On February 1, 1931, we could number only ten business accounting brigades in the USSR, comprising 130 persons. By April 1, 1932, their number had increased to 155,000, comprising one and a half million workers. The number of plants, and still more of separate shops, where there is hundred-per-cent business accounting is continually increasing. Leningrad takes the first place. It was in Leningrad that the first initiative towards organising business accounting brigades took its rise, and now no less than 70 per cent of the workers there are included in business accounting brigades. In the Moscow district, there are 30,000 business accounting brigades in the Ukraine, comprising 300,000 workers" (Ninth All-Union Congress of Trade Unions, 1932, speech by Shvernik, general secretary, p. 31).

The work of a business accounting brigade is described in detail in *A Business Accounting Brigade*, by A. Nikolayev, a worker in the Baltic shipyards (Moscow, Cooperative Publishing Society of Foreign Workers in the USSR, 1932, 40 pp.).

1932 industrial and financial plan is being carried out as regards both quantity and quality ; whether the *udarniki* are carrying out their pledges, whether lack of responsibility and equality of wages for unequal work have been rooted out. They should test whether the enterprise, as well as its departments and units, its restaurants, farms, cooperative store and management, are ready to accomplish the 1933 programme.”¹

Professional Associations within USSR Trade Unionism

The trade union organisation, in which all those employed by each enterprise, and all the enterprises in the USSR, having the same predominant purpose, are associated in a single trade union, irrespective of craft or vocation, is accompanied, at any rate for certain crafts or vocations, by a certain amount of separate organisation, irrespective of establishment or industry, in which workers of the same craft or kind throughout the USSR are associated together. Thus the medical practitioners employed at salaries in all the various factories and farms, hospitals or institutions, who are, along with the nurses and ward maids, practically all members of the Medical or Public Health Workers' Trade Union, one of the meetings of which we have already described, are also united in an exclusively medical organisation—nominally only a section of that union, but having its own regional branches and an All-Union congress, at which are discussed all the subjects in which the medical practitioners have a special interest.²

In the same way the brain-working specialists in applied science, whether engineers or electricians, chemists or biologists—more than half of whom are now “soviet-trained”—employed in mines, power stations, factories, oil-fields or farms, anywhere in the USSR, have their own associations, supplementary to their membership of the several trade unions in which their establishments are included. These intellectuals are reported to be “organised into sections at all levels of the trade union

¹ *Moscow Daily News*, December 28, 1932.

See also *ibid.*, January 3, 1933, for report of meeting of shock brigaders at the Moscow Auto Plant (Amo), which had over 16,000 of its workers taking part in socialist competition.

² In pre-war times, from 1870 onward, the various grades and sections of medical practitioners (doctors, pharmacists, midwives, nurses, etc.) formed professional societies for mutual aid. By 1905 there were nearly a score of such societies, most of which united in publishing the *Medical Workers' Journal*. In the subsequent years of repression these organisations declined in membership and activity. In 1918 most of the societies of the humbler grades dissolved themselves in order to form the All-Russian Medical Workers' Union. The pharmaceutical workers' society merged into this in 1920, together with the veterinary workers and the sanitary inspectors. The doctors still stood out, insisting on retaining their separate association. In 1920 the now powerful All-Russian Medical Workers' Union appealed to the Central Council of Trade Unions (which became the AUCCTU); and this body compulsorily dissolved the doctors' separate society, and insisted on the Medical Workers' Trade Union being recognised as the sole authority for all grades and sections of the profession. Many doctors joined at once, but others long resisted, considerable ill-feeling resulting. This gradually subsided when a special section for medical practitioners was formed within the Union (*Health Work in Soviet Russia*, by Anna J. Haines, New York, 1928, pp. 30-32).

structure. They are united at the top into a central body known, as the Inter-Union Bureau of Engineers and Technicians of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions. Membership is entirely voluntary, and funds are set aside from the dues of these members to cover their particular work. They usually have their own special technical magazines. . . . These sections hold their own conferences nationally as well as provincially; they have executive bureaux elected at these congresses. . . . Over 500 delegates attended one of the congresses convened in 1927. . . . Reports to this congress show over 105,000 members in the sections."¹ Another congress, still more numerously attended, and claiming to represent an enrolment of 125,000 members, was held in 1932, when it was welcomed by both governmental and scientific dignitaries. It is significant that the principal oration was entrusted to Shvernik, the general secretary of the AUCCTU, who addressed the congress at great length, urging on them the continuous study of industrial technique, with a view to its further improvement. "The local trade union groups", he urged, "should strengthen their links with the engineers and other specialists, and support their work, keep them from being snowed under with petty routine, so that they can give real leadership. And the unions should see that these intellectual leaders get better living conditions."²

The most ancient, and in the intellectual world the most important, of these associations of intellectual specialists is the Academy of Science, under the presidency of the aged Karpinsky, now over eighty, which counts on the assistance of more than a thousand scientific professors and researchers in ninety institutes. These are scattered throughout the USSR, though predominantly in Leningrad, Moscow, Kiev and Kharkov. In equipment and resources many of these institutes excite the envy of scientists of other countries. Besides its numerous scientific meetings, at which papers are read on every branch of science, the Academy now holds a certain number of public receptions, at which less technical addresses are given on particular subjects of general interest. "Zaslavsky", we are told, "vividly describes the scene. In the body of the hall the proletariat, fresh from factory, plant, technical school, docks. On to the spacious stage file the academicians amid thunderous applause from the gathering. Here are names famous throughout the world in astronomy, physiology, biology, geology and other sciences. Here, leonine frosted heads, broad stooped shoulders, many of the traditional figures of the scientists of the bygone era. Some still wear the ancient frock coat of ceremony, with the traditional contempt of their kind for clothes."³ The Academy of Science—not without some struggle—has accepted the régime of Soviet Communism. In so far as its members receive salaries from their institutes, as most of the academicians do, they are eligible for membership of the trade union to which their institute belongs, many of them have joined, and

¹ *Soviet Trade Unions*, by Robert W. Dunn, 1928, p. 67.

² *Moscow Daily News*, November 23, November 27, December 3, 1932.

³ *Ibid.*, November 27, 1932.

some of these have now become active members of the trade unions with which the academy had formerly no connection.

There are, however, other academies. Thus the Academy of the History of Material Culture unites a membership of 10,000 archaeologists,¹ mostly employed in museums and universities in the various parts of the USSR, where they are members of the trade unions to which their institutions belong. Besides local meetings and periodical national congresses for the promotion of its studies, this academy equips and sends archaeological expeditions to various parts of the USSR, and undertakes or supervises excavations.

We are unable to give anything like a complete list of these professional associations of intellectual workers; not, as in Britain and the United States, parallel with and scarcely conscious of the trade union organisation, but forming integral parts of it; superimposed nationally, so to speak, on the universal organisation by establishments. There is a central association of teachers; there is a press writers' section of the typographical trade union, and a scientific workers' section of the educational workers' trade union. There is a special section for statisticians and accountants in the commercial workers' trade union. The professors and scientific workers in museums, libraries and laboratories have a section of their own, with a membership (in 1927) of 14,000, organised in fifty branches in as many cities. The authors have been organised in several societies; one of them was confined to members of the Communist Party, which tended to a certain asperity against "non-Party" writers. By a decision of the Central Committee of the Party, in April 1932, this exclusive organisation was dissolved, in order that all authors who support the soviet régime, and who attempt to participate in socialist construction, whether or not they are Party members or candidates, may constitute a single society of soviet authors.² There is an All-Union Sectional Bureau of Engineers and Technicians (YMBIT), which at the instance of Shverník, secretary of the AUCCTU, resolved to participate actively in the "agricultural machinery repairing campaign" on the 32 repair-shops of the machine-tractor stations; and also in the "drive for technical education for Comsomols".³ There is also a Society of Soviet Architects, founded in 1932, with 6 branches in the RSFSR and a monthly journal of its own.⁴ All these segregations of professionals, formally authorised by the Seventh All-Union Congress of Trade Unions in 1926, have for their object the promotion of their special cultural activities; not forgetting, however, the raising of their members' salaries, the improvement in their housing conditions and the establishment of special pension systems.⁵

On the general trade union reorganisation in September 1934, Shverník, the secretary of the AUCCTU, fully recognised the utility and importance of these professional associations uniting for specific purposes the members

¹ *Ibid.*

² *Manchester Guardian*, May 1, 1932.

³ *Moscow Daily News*, October 28, 1933.

⁴ *Ibid.*, August 17, 1933.

⁵ *Soviet Trade Unions*, by Robert W. Dunn, 1928, pp. 67-69.

of various trade unions. It was, he explained to the present writers, contemplated that there would be several such sectional associations associated within most, if not all, of the 154 trade unions among which the 47 older unions were distributed. It had, however, not been possible to complete this organisation by September 1934, and it would have to be postponed until 1935.

This specialist segregation within the trade union organisation is not confined to the intellectual workers. The limitation in 1931 of the number of unions to 47 involved the association in one union of many different kinds of artisans and labourers. The trade union of food workers, for instance, united operatives in flourmills with those in slaughter-houses, candy factories, bakeries, fish canneries and tobacco factories. In many cases, accordingly, at the instance of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, specialised sections have been formed, especially with a view to a more detailed study of processes as a means of increasing productivity, as well as to a better-instructed collective bargaining on behalf of particular kinds of workers throughout the USSR. "Parallel with the establishment of these sections," said the C.C.C.P., "the holding of special meetings and production conferences according to trades must be put into practice (foundry workers, moulders, machinists, examiners, mechanics, stoppers, tractor mechanics, assistant foremen, cotton printers, etc.); and in the shops a delegate representing the leading trade must be designated along with the shop delegate."¹ We find the AUCCTU, whilst dutifully promulgating this policy of sectionalisation, not forgetful of the possible danger to the trade union organisation of such "particularisms". "The sections", the Trade Union Bulletin of the AUCCTU had pointed out as early as 1926, "must not be regarded as an initial step towards dividing the unions, or turning the sections into independent bodies. The sections must be created within a union, as auxiliary bodies which can better examine into the special industrial and living conditions of the members and serve them more satisfactorily."²

Similarly, in the case of the Inter-Union Bureau of Engineers and Technicians, to which we have already referred, it has been ordered that decisions of section bodies have to be submitted to and confirmed by the governing body of the particular union to whose members they relate before they become effective.³

The Profintern

The preceding description of the complicated trade union organisation of Soviet Communism does not complete the analysis of the pattern. As we have seen in the case of the soviet hierarchy, and as we shall presently describe in the case of the Communist Party, what is contemplated is membership of a far-reaching international organisation which is eventually

¹ *Report of Ninth All-Union Congress of Trade Unions, 1933*, p. 110 (Kaganovich's report). A stopper is a miner working a stope or layer.

² *Soviet Trade Unions*, by Robert W. Dunn, 1928, p. 69.

³ *Ibid.* p. 67.

to be world-wide. For man as a wage-earning producer there is to be eventually a world trade unionism of the soviet pattern. The whole trade union organisation of the USSR accordingly belongs to the International Council of "Red" Trade Unions, commonly known as Profintern, which was formally established at an international gathering at Moscow summoned by the AUCCTU in 1921.¹ There was already in existence an International Association of Trade Unions, centred at Amsterdam, which had secured the adhesion of the great bulk of European trade unionism, irrespective of political opinions. With the spread of social democratic views among the workmen, this "trade union International" had become associated with the "Second International", the alliance of Labour and Socialist societies established in 1889, at Paris, to which the socialist parties of western Europe were affiliated. These very generally took up an attitude of hostility to Bolshevism, principally because of its intolerance of opposition and its suppression of the Menshevik section of the social democratic party. Hence, just as the Comintern was set up at Moscow in opposition to the "Second International", so the Profintern was set up there in opposition to the "Amsterdam International".

The Profintern is professedly governed by an annual congress of delegates from the several national organisations of communist trade unions. Such congresses were, for nearly a decade, held at Moscow, but opinions differ as to the extent to which they can be said ever to have been effectively either international or representative of trade unions as such. At the congress held in 1927, for instance, when the "Red Trade Union International" claimed to speak for 13,862,209 members of affiliated organisations, 10,248,000 were trade unionists of the USSR, and 2,800,000 were members of Chinese societies of various kinds, which were promptly dissolved or have simply faded out. The other three-quarters of a million included a few communist trade unions, chiefly in Germany, France and Czechoslovakia, but was mainly composed, as Lozovsky himself reported, not of trade unions at all but of a varied array of nondescript bodies, including minority groups, illegal associations and miscellaneous committees in some forty or fifty other countries, including North and South

¹ The published reports and pamphlets relating to the "Red International" (Profintern) are very numerous, and many of them exist in English, French and German versions. A useful list with an elaborate chronicle of proceedings (down to 1926) will be found in *The Trade Union Movement in Soviet Russia* (International Labour Office, League of Nations, 1927, pp. 262-263). A later list appears in *Handwörterbuch des Gewerkschaften*.

Among those available in English, French or German, see, in particular, *Resolutions, Proclamations and Manifestos of the First Congress of Trade and Industrial Unions*, Moscow, 1921; *Minutes of the International Council of Red Trade Unions*, Moscow, 1921; *The Red Trade Union International*, Moscow, 1921-1926; *The World Trade Union Movement before and after the War*, 1924, and *Moscow or Amsterdam?* 1924, both by A. Lozovsky; *World Communists in Action*, by J. Piatnitsky, 1931; and *Les Questions vitales du mouvement révolutionnaire internationale*, Paris, 62 pp., by the same. The British Government Blue Book (Cmd. 2682 of 1926) contains a miscellaneous mass of documents of the Red International seized by the London police in October 1925. Many similar documents may at any time be found published in *Inprecorr* (*International Press Correspondence*). See also *Soviet Trade Unions*, by Robert W. Dunn, 1928, pp. 222-252; *Soviet Russia*, by W. H. Chamberlin, 1930, pp. 267-274.

America, Australia and New Zealand, India, and Africa,¹ hardly any of which had sent anyone to Moscow expressly as delegates to the congress. The subsequent congresses have been of the same kind. The delegates consist of those appointed by the AUCCTU of the USSR, together with a tiny number of persons actually sent for the purpose by foreign trade unions, supplemented by others sent by the nondescript groups above mentioned, as well as by communist trade unionists of foreign birth or nationality, residing and working in Moscow, and even stray visitors of like opinions who happen to be there. This congress appoints an executive council, with presidium, president and secretary, most of them habitually resident in Moscow. The representative validity so far as foreign trade unions are concerned and the practical effectiveness in other countries of an international organisation of this kind appears to be of the slightest. We do not wish to imply that the Profintern does not express the views of large numbers of communists in other countries, who have occasionally gone to the ballot-box in millions, and who exercise in their respective countries an influence, not only among the unemployed, but also in trade union memberships and meetings, which have, except in a few instances, as yet not achieved control of the trade unions themselves. It is the claim of the Red International to represent foreign trade unions as such which is disputed, not its representation of the opinions of the communist members of the wage-earning class.

The Central Council of the Profintern is a body including four of the leading members of the Communist Party of the USSR, with two persons belonging to each of the large industrial countries. The real work is done by an Executive Bureau of seven members, two of them belonging to the USSR. The proceedings of the Executive Bureau, though often lacking in accurate knowledge of the position of labour in other countries, have not been without vigour and dexterity. There is a polyglot secretariat, paid for out of the dues levied by the Profintern on its affiliated bodies, and thus largely by the trade unions of the USSR. This secretariat is departmentally organised by countries, and includes communists belonging to one or other of the principal nations dealt with. Its extensive correspondence with all sorts of communist organisations in the different countries has, in the past, frequently included detailed "directives" as to how these bodies ought to proceed. These instructions, the tone of which excites some resentment, have been, in the past, occasionally accompanied by substantial remittances under various disguises, usually in aid of strikes. Since 1929, however, it is believed that these subsidies have, except in some cases when communist officials have required legal

¹ The character of the affiliations was described by the President of the Congress in 1930. "You know that the trade union movement which is united in the Profintern is most varied in so far as organisational structure is concerned. Independent organisations, illegal trade unions, semi-legal organisations, and further, trade union oppositions, or minorities inside trade unions, all belong to the 'Profintern'" (Extract translated from A. Lozovsky's report to the Moscow Conference of Active Workers in Trade Unions, September 9, 1930, on "The Results of the Fifth Congress of the Profintern").

defence in criminal prosecutions, dwindled to minute sums, designed more to maintain connection than with any idea of fostering a world upheaval.

The story of the proceedings of Profintern during the past dozen years is largely taken up with the continuous controversy with the "Amsterdam International", which, in 1932, commanded the allegiance of many millions of trade union membership in nearly all countries except the USSR (also, for other reasons, except the United States of America), and with its satellites, the 27 international federations of the trade unions of separate industries. Profintern has been tireless in its incessant attempt to arrange for what it calls a "united front" against capitalism throughout the world. It cannot, however, bring itself to unite with an organisation formed on the basis of trade unionism as it exists in capitalist countries which, in the present interests of these members as wage-earners, avowedly forgoes any attempt to overturn by force the existing order in which these members actually find their living. On the other hand, the Amsterdam International refuses to make any kind of alliance, or undertake any common enterprise, with a body which glories in existing for purposes definitely criminal under the laws of the states in which the trade unionists live, and which is avowedly directed from Moscow, and is universally supposed to be under the control of the Politbureau of the Communist Party of the USSR. Apart from usually fruitless manoeuvres for a "united front", the Red International does all it can to encourage and support strikes and industrial disturbances in all capitalist countries, and, wherever possible, the active propaganda of communism itself. Its vision of a future world organisation of trade unions, *under a universal communist régime*, is not without merit. But in the meantime, with trade unionism facing capitalist employers and unfriendly governments, we cannot help thinking that, as in the case of the Comintern, the avowed interference of Moscow in the internal affairs of other countries actually militates, by the nationalist resentment that it creates, against the progress of communism itself.

How does Soviet Trade Unionism compare with British Trade Unionism?

Trade unionism in the USSR, it will have been realised, is a large and powerful organisation, more extensive than trade unionism in any other country, more busily engaged in a wider range of functions, and more closely connected with the other organs of the state. It is, we think, unique in the intense interest that it takes in increasing the productivity of the nation's industry; in its inclusion within its own membership of the directors and managers who have taken the place of the capitalist employers, and in its persistent desire to reduce costs. We shall describe in a subsequent chapter how cordially it has accepted the various arrangements—in substitution for the capitalist's incessant desire to increase his profits—for securing the utmost possible output at the lowest possible expense to the community.¹ But what, it may be asked, does the trade

¹ See Chapter IX. in Part II., "In Place of Profit".

union in the USSR retain from its model in British trade unionism? Put summarily, it may be answered that the soviet trade union, like the British, is emphatically the organ of the wage-earners as such: it is based on optional individual membership and subscription; it appoints and pays its own officials and manages its business by its own elected committees; it conducts, through its highest committees and its national officials, the collective bargaining with the employing organisations by which the general scheme and standard rates of wages are fixed; piece-work rates are settled in each factory, job by job, after discussion with the union's local officials and not without their consent; these officials may actually be specialist "rate-fixers", for whom the union organises special training; it takes part, through its chosen representatives and appointed officials, in almost every organ of government; finally, its essential function is that of maintaining and improving the worker's conditions of life—taking, however, the broadest view of these, and seeking their advancement only in common with those of the whole community of workers.

Not so easy to explain is the relation of the soviet trade union to the other organs of the Soviet State. "Are the trade unions", asked Tomsky in 1927, "dependent on or independent of the state? If this is to be understood in the formal interpretation which Western European trade unions usually give to the question, then, of course, we are independent, for the trade unions are managed by their own democratically elected organs, have their own funds, and are in no way subject to the state. In the wider meaning of the word, in the sense of class politics, the unions are dependent, as organs of a united class, for the state is our state. But this dependence is based on mutual dependence, for equally the Council of People's Commissars and the Central Executive Committee of the Soviet Government is dependent upon the trade unions. How can they be independent when we have 4 representatives in the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the Soviet Government and 60 representatives in the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets itself; when we have a consultative vote in the Council of People's Commissaries on every question that arises therein; when the Council of People's Commissaries cannot decide a single question concerning the life of the workers without our final decision in the matter; when we have the right to remove from the agenda of any high state organ any question whatever, by a mere telephone call saying, 'Just a moment. You want to discuss such and such a matter: but you have not asked us our opinion. We have something to say on the matter. Be good enough to postpone that item'? And we know of no case when this has been refused us. The trade unions have the right to call upon any of the People's Commissaries to appear before them to make a report, and no one of them has the right to refuse us on the grounds that he is not formally responsible to the unions in question."¹

We suggest that the relation of soviet trade unionism to the other

¹ *The Trade Unions, the Party and the State*, by M. Tomsky, Moscow, 1927, pp. 18-19.

organs of the soviet state cannot be accurately estimated until the position and influence of the Communist Party is appreciated. To this we devote a subsequent chapter entitled "The Vocation of Leadership" (Chapter V. in Part I.).

SECTION II

THE ASSOCIATIONS OF OWNER-PRODUCERS

It was characteristic of Lenin's genius that he set superlative value on the principle of multifirmity in social organisation, not only for the sake of that universal participation in government which, as he held, could alone make democracy real, but also as a "guarantee of vitality . . . a pledge that the common and single aim will be successfully achieved". Only on this principle, it was urged, could men and women of diverse temperaments and talents, antecedents and circumstances, be all enrolled for the supreme task of building the socialist state. Hence we find, in the USSR, alongside the trade union of the wage and salary earners employed by state, municipal and consumers' cooperative enterprises and institutions, an entirely different—one might almost say a contradictory—type of organisation, the self-governing workshop or collective farm. In this type the members are not recipients of salary or wage; indeed, not employed under any contract of service at all. They are, individually or jointly, owners or part owners not only of the instruments of production but also of the products of their labour. This method of organising man as a producer has been, in western Europe, for over a century, continuously advocated, and frequently practised under the name of cooperative production, as a desirable and practicable alternative to the organisation of industry under the capitalist profitmaker. As such it has been the subject of heated controversy; is it either a desirable or a practicable alternative to the wage system? Incidentally, it may be said that the present writers replied in the negative,¹ at any rate within the framework of the capitalist system. Hence we have been all the more interested to discover that, within the framework of Soviet Communism, associations of owner-producers, of one or other kind, have, within the past decade, become actually the predominant type in the agriculture of the USSR; whilst they have apparently demonstrated their advantages in various branches of manufacturing industry, and in such widespread methods of earning a living as hunting and fishing.

(a) THE SELF-GOVERNING WORKSHOP

We start our analysis of the constitutional structure of associations of owner-producers in the USSR, not with the largest and in every way

¹ See *The Cooperative Movement in Great Britain*, by Beatrice Potter, 1891; *Industrial Democracy*, by S. and B. Webb, 1898; *The Consumers' Cooperative Movement*, by the same, 1922.

number of these owner-producers in industrial pursuits was given as five and a quarter millions, constituting a census population of some fifteen or twenty millions, representing as much as one-eighth of Tsarist Russia at that date. Their gross output was estimated at 2400 million roubles, equal to one-half of that of the factory industry of the time. During the seven years of war and civil war, 1914-1920, although some of the unions of artels "achieved important results in the service of the country and the army",¹ two-thirds of this population of handicraftsmen faded away, the bulk of the survivors being found, in 1921, in the more remote villages which suffered least from the ravages of the contending armies.

Under the Soviet Government these independent owner-producers have been, from 1919 onwards, and especially since 1932, revived and encouraged, as an approved alternative form of production (particularly for household supplies) to that of employment at wages in the industries conducted by government or trust, municipality or consumers' cooperative society. Lenin's original policy was "to maintain and develop energetically cooperative production", not only as a way of alleviating the condition of the peasants, but also as the means by which the small industry could, as he then believed, "develop into mass production, on the basis of free associations of workers".² Consequently the handicraftsmen were, from the outset, enabled freely to form productive cooperative societies, which have been, at times, granted state credit for the purchase of materials at the lowest possible prices. Sometimes small factories or workshops, abandoned by their owners, were handed over to such societies. In other cases they have been helped to buy machinery and workshop equipment. Occasionally the experts of a trust, or of a particular modernised plant, have assisted one of the larger artels to change its whole system of production in such a way as greatly to increase its output.³

The various government departments, central or municipal, together with the manufacturing trusts and the consumers' cooperative societies, have, during the past decade, willingly supplied their own needs by contracting to take from the manufacturing associations of owner-producers (incops), at agreed fixed prices, a large proportion of their output, thus ensuring for long periods a profitable market for their wares. Nor have the isolated independent handicraftsmen been left entirely unaided. The incops have been asked to do everything possible to bring

¹ *The Cooperative Movement in Russia during the War*, by E. M. Kayden and A. N. Antsiferov, 1929, p. 366.

² *Les Voies du développement de la coopération de production en URSS*, par W. Tikhomirov; quoting from vol. xx. p. 466 of the Russian text of Lenin's *Works*.

³ "Thus, upon the paper's (*Trud*) initiative, a factory let us say manufacturing shoes, undertakes to assist a shoemaking artel in improving and increasing its output. An artel is a cooperative enterprise, which unites sometimes as many as five or six hundred artisans who formerly worked in their own little shops. Although in numbers these artels often present sizable factories, the method of work too often remains as of old, each man doing a complete job without attempting to sectionalize the work. Under the guidance of experts from a factory employing modern production methods, it has been possible to so arrange the work of the artels as to increase the output many times" (*Moscow Daily News*, June 23, 1932).

them into the network of organisations, and meanwhile to assist them by contracting to take their individual products so as to assist their marketing.¹ Especially since the establishment of the Five-Year Plan in 1928 have these manufacturing associations of owner-producers multiplied and developed. The result has been, not only the progressive revival of the great bulk of the kustar industry,² but also the enlargement of its scope, and its assumption of definite constitutional forms according to the pattern common throughout the soviet system. By a remarkable decree of July 23, 1932, by the Central Executive Committee and the Sovnarkom of the USSR, the whole system was further developed and drastically reorganised.³

At the beginning of 1932, in addition to an uncounted host of isolated individual handicraftsmen who still exist, in the cities as well as in the villages, to the aggregate number of a million or more, the number of definitely organised cooperative societies of this kind was estimated at about 20,000, with 30,000 workshops or other establishments, having a total membership of 2,350,000 men and women, representing a census population of seven or eight millions, with an aggregate gross production of commodities valued at about four and a half thousand million roubles. Another calculation of later date, and including a wider range of societies, puts the amount, in 1932, of "output of the producing cooperative associations, including invalids and timber-working cooperatives" (to which we refer elsewhere), at "6230 million roubles, calculated at planned prices of 1932".⁴ Whereas before the war the great majority of the handicraftsmen worked at home, now fewer than a third do so, and of the members of the cooperative societies fewer than one-eighth. These societies, in half a dozen instances, now run small coal-pits, producing, in the aggregate, more than two million tons per annum, and, in one case, at Rechesk in

¹ When unemployment was rife, the labour exchanges occasionally pressed a cooperative society, whose little factory was manufacturing successfully, to admit as additional members individual handicraftsmen who had failed to maintain themselves by independent production; or to accept unemployed youths as additional apprentices and eventual members; sometimes selecting one half from sons of existing members and the other half from the labour exchange.

² So greatly has the nationalised and municipalised industry increased that all the handicraft industry accounts only for one-fifth of the manufacturing production of the USSR, in 1933, instead of the one-third of that of Tsarist Russia with which it was credited in 1913.

³ These associations of owner-producers in industry (incops) have been classified as under by the latest Russian authority on the subject (*The Legislation of Incops*, by D. M. Genkin, Moscow, 1933):

(1) Associations for Supply and Sale, in which every member works at home, but sells the whole or part of his output through the society, from which he obtains his raw material and adjuncts. Members, who must themselves work, enjoy a reduction of income tax on the part of their output sold through the society.

(2) Associations for Joint Production, in which the members all work at home, but materials and product alike belong to the society, and not to individual members.

(3) Artels, which maintain a common workshop in which members are associated in a particular craft or branch of industry (the law forbidding an artel composed of workers in different crafts).

⁴ *Summary of Results of the First Five-Year Plan* (Gosplan, 1933, p. 61).

the Urals, even a blast furnace.¹ There are, in Kazakestan, lead mines under incops ; elsewhere various small machine-making factories ; many quarries, brickfields and lime-kilns, and even small chemical plants producing soap, acetic acid, iodine, nicotine and various radio supplies.² But the incops mainly devote themselves, to the extent of more than half their work, to the preparation of various kinds of food products and to the production and repair of all sorts of commodities for household use, such as furniture and kitchen equipment, boots and shoes, barrels and baskets, every description of textile stuffs and made-up clothing, mats and rugs of all kinds, toys, leather goods, artistic wood and iron work, pottery, and even hand painting on wood, by those who formerly produced religious icons. For sale to the public in the cities, these cooperative societies have over a thousand shops, and more than that number of stands. Their members, indeed, have come to form an important element in the urban population. Whereas, in 1926, the handicraftsmen in the cities numbered only half a million, or 2.1 per cent of the population, in 1931 the urban registration disclosed their numbers as about two millions, or 6.2 per cent of the population.³

The Members' Meeting

The base of the constitutional hierarchy, in which these organised groups of industrial owner-producers are represented, is everywhere the meetings of members of their several incops or industrial cooperative societies, which may each include anything from a few dozen to a thousand or more workers ; the average being a little over a hundred. In the smaller incops these meetings, which every member over 18 years of age is expected to attend, take place frequently, according to the rules of the particular society, usually every few weeks. The course of the incop's business is reviewed by the president, manager or other official, and any subject of interest to the members can be discussed. Once a year the president—often also a manager—and, to constitute the presidium, half a dozen other members are elected, together with the prescribed number of delegates to other bodies. The incops in a given locality, and manufacturing the same kind of commodities, may also join together in a specialised " union " for common convenience, as for the joint supply of tools, raw materials or auxiliary components, or joint representation in dealings with state

¹ The Rechesk plant, in the Urals, produces 15,000 tons of pig-iron a year, practically all of which supplies the needs of other incops. In other cases there are rolling mills, which refashion scrap iron and steel obtained from the plants under the direction of the Commissariat of Heavy Industries. The coal-mines of the incops in the Donbas and elsewhere in the Ukraine and in East Siberia supply indifferently other incops, or the local industries, or USSR enterprises.

² Much of the work of timber-cutting, as well as that of fashioning the timber into planks, doors, plywood, etc., is done by groups of workmen associated in artels. These, however, are not included in the incops organisation, but have a union of their own (Vsekopromlessoyus), which works in conjunction with the newly formed Commissariat of Timber (Narkomles). These timber artels are grouped, not by the Union republics but by oblasts or krais ; and, in some special cases, by autonomous republics.

³ *Summary of Results of the First Five-Year Plan* (Gosplan, 1933, p. 189).

departments. But the principal delegation is to the regional council, to which all incops within the region (usually an oblast or krai), irrespective of the particular commodity that they manufacture, are now required to belong. The members' meeting elects also in each case a committee of revision, whose main duty is to audit the accounts. According to law this committee ought to include in its membership some members of other incops. It is this committee of revision that decides the occasional disputes that arise in the society, subject to appeal to the regional council. If the membership of the incop does not exceed 300, it is the ordinary meeting of members which makes this election of delegates. If, however, as is increasingly coming to be the case in the large cities, the incop has many hundreds of members, the aggregate meeting is held only annually, to elect a smaller executive council of a few dozen members; and it is this executive council which chooses alike the incop's own officers and its delegates to the regional council.

Under the revised arrangements of 1932, the regional councils (soviets), whilst aiding the incops by instruction, planning, advice, and settlement of disputes, do not themselves have any operative functions. They do not, that is to say, themselves engage in production or distribution,¹ nor are the incops in any way hampered in their several industries. Each incop is freely to obtain for itself the materials that it requires, with the exceptions of wool, cotton, flax, hemp, silk cocoons and hides other than pig-hides. These may be obtained how the incop pleases, but only within the geographical districts prescribed by the Supplies Committee of the Council of Labour and Defence (STO). Each incop is also to be free to acquire from any of the state enterprises such industrial remnants, waste and refuse (including metal scrap, textile waste, rags, rejects and waste timber) as it may need, and all state enterprises are directed to enter into contracts for these supplies at prices to be agreed upon. The incops are to be free to obtain from the state bank the credit that they require, and to sell their products as and wherever they choose, including the open markets in the towns and their own retail shops. Except when working on materials provided from state funds, the incops are no longer required to dispose of any part of the output to any state department, but all state departments are directed to place with the incops such orders as they can. Orders for its own manufactured products may now be sought and obtained by each incop direct from the consumers' cooperative movement, or from state or municipal purchasers. Prices are left to be settled by agreement or contract in each case. The one transaction that is strictly prohibited is "speculation", meaning buying commodities with the intention of selling them again at a profit—in other words, the incops are not to engage in mere dealing. It should be noted that, although

¹ There seems to be one exception. The Vsekopromsoviet has under it a "metal-promsoyus", or group of incops working in metal, which itself performs "operative functions" in conjunction with these incops.

the incops are founded on the principle of a partnership of the workers themselves, they are allowed, by way of exception, to employ non-members at wages, as specialists (such as engineers) or as subsidiary or seasonal workers, to the extent of not more than one-fifth of the membership, or than 30 per cent of the combined total of members and candidates for membership. The non-members thus employed at wages, who are generally members of their respective trade unions, must all receive the rates current in their several industries ; as agreed to by the trade unions. Nothing in the nature of undercutting is allowed.

The Regional Council of Incops

The decree of July 23, 1932, whilst abolishing various intermediate and All-Union federal bodies of industrial cooperative societies,¹ established an obligatory association of the incops within a given region ; not for the purpose of control or of interference with their business enterprises—in which they were to enjoy an enlarged independence—but solely for their assistance in fulfilling the tasks which they had undertaken. The region for this purpose was to be either each of the six smaller constituent republics, or else, in the RSFSR and in other districts of highly developed industry, the oblast or krai, or an area specially defined. Each such region has now a council of delegates from its constituent incops, which are represented approximately in proportion to their several memberships, as fixed by the council itself from time to time. This council no longer decides on the levy to be made upon the funds of each incop for regional and All-Union administration and other purposes. All such levies are to be kept down to a minimum, and to be made by a special meeting for the purpose, at which specially delegated representatives of the several incops within the region will confer with representatives of the regional council. That council will be responsible for supervising the audit of the societies' accounts by their own committees of revision, and, where necessary, for supplying competent auditors to assist any society. The regional council is also responsible for supervision of the general direction of the incops' several activities but solely for the purpose of securing the due fulfilment of the obligations undertaken by each of them. The greatest possible independence in management is to be left to each incop, on the understanding that they are, for the most part, primarily to supply the household commodities needed by the rural community, to the extent at least of 70 per cent of their production. The incops declare that their aim is

¹ Thus the decree peremptorily "liquidates" the All-Union Federation of Food Industry Cooperatives, the All-Union Federation of Heavy Industry Cooperatives, and the All-Union Federation of Industrial Cooperatives ; and lays down that "under no circumstances is it permitted to create in the regional councils of incops cumbersome apparatus, once the organisation has been permitted in the structure of the All-Union Federation of Incops of specialised groups for the fundamental forms of the incops". Republic Associations of the heavy metal industry are to continue ; and also the All-Union Cooperatives of the Timber Industry, but "without creating associations of these cooperatives in the various republics".

to make this percentage at least 75 per cent, but it is admitted that this amount has not yet been reached.

The All-Union Council of Industrial Cooperatives

In place of the Central Federation (Vsekopromsoyus) established in 1922, as a directing and coordinating centre, there is now established an All-Union Council of Incops (Vsekopromsoviet), to which all the regional councils send representatives, and which also acts as republic council for the RSFSR. It is expressly laid down in the decree that this "Council of the Incops of the USSR and RSFSR shall not perform operative functions of any kind". It is to be supervisory, not executive. What is to this council expressly "reserved" is "the organising work, accountancy, directorial, and prospective planning and representation of the incops in government organisations (concerning credits, funds of supply, protection of state laws, grants to the incops)".¹

In 1932 was held the first All-Union Congress of the reorganised producers' cooperatives² (incops), at which some 200 delegates attended. Such a Congress will presumably be held every few years, but had, in 1934, not yet been repeated. The Congress elected an executive council to meet as a plenum once in every few months, with a president, and other members of a presidium, by whom the work of supervising the whole 20,000 incops is done. During 1933 and 1934 the executive council invited to Moscow for consultation the heads of most of the incops from time to time.

There has never been a People's Commissar for cooperative production, any more than for the consumers' cooperative movement. Such supervision and attention as has been given to the subject by the government at the Kremlin has come within the province of the Council of Labour and Defence (STO). It is interesting that the president for the time being of the All-Union Council of Incops (Vsekopromsoviet) is admitted, when he chooses to attend, to the meetings of the Central Executive Committee (TSIK), the Sovnarkom and the Council of Labour and Defence (STO); in each case with only a consultative voice. Perhaps the most important relation into which the All-Union Council enters is its participation with the officials of Gosplan in the annual settlement and the almost continuous adjustment of the General Plan, so far as concerns the societies forming its membership. The preliminary plan is drawn up by Gosplan itself, but it is based on the separate reports which the Executive Committee obtains from every one of the 20,000 incops, stating what they have pro-

¹ The membership of the central federation for previous years is given as :

1922	84,000	1928	1,004,000
1923	187,000	1929	1,454,000
1924	248,000	1930	1,944,000
1925	344,000	1931)	2,353,000
1926	457,000	1932)	
1927	599,000		

² *Moscow Daily News*, December 28, 1932.

duced during the preceding year, and what they think they can produce for the ensuing year. The provisional decision by Gosplan of what kind and what amount of production should be undertaken by the incops, arrived at in consultation with the Executive Committee, after consideration of the needs of the USSR as a whole, is then submitted to the several regional councils, who pass on each part of it, with criticisms and suggestions, to the several incops, whose officials and committees have promptly to give it their serious consideration, and return it with any objections or counter-proposals. If any incop finds a difficulty in undertaking the manufacture of any of the commodities that the Plan requires from it, the regional council may arrange for the technical instruction of some of its younger members at a special district school maintained for the purpose.

The educational provision made by the incops for their own members and their families, apart from and in addition to that made by the soviets under the People's Commissars of Education in the several constituent or autonomous republics, is extensive and steadily increasing. In 1934 no less than 98 million roubles was appropriated for this purpose by the Executive Committee. All the larger units maintain their own trade schools and evening technical classes. In some of the principal cities there are university colleges, exclusively for members of incops or their sons and daughters—that at Leningrad had, in 1934, 2400 students all over eighteen, pursuing five-year courses. In addition, more than sixty technicums are maintained. Three-quarters of the students are provided with stipends, sometimes more liberal than those of the students of the state institutions. There are special club-houses for incop members. Their new "Palace of Culture" at Leningrad cost ten million roubles, and claims to be the best in the city. The incops have also their own holiday homes and sanatoria.

Members of the incops are not covered by the general scheme of social insurance. The All-Union Council has accordingly provided its own fund, by a levy on all the incops, in which the whole membership is included, including the wage-earners whom they employ. This fund had in 1933 an accumulated capital of over a hundred million roubles, being eight times as much as in 1929. The fund provides medical attendance and medicines, and secures admission to hospitals and convalescent homes, for all the members and their wives and children throughout the USSR. All confinements are treated in hospital, with sixteen weeks full wages, as in the state scheme. This is wholly independent of the People's Commissars of Health, except that the assistance of the state medical service is obtained, on a contract involving the payment of forty million roubles annually, in districts in which the number of incop members is insufficient to warrant an independent medical service.

We see, in this reorganisation of the old kustar artels, an extraordinarily rapid development of what has again become, alongside the state and municipal factories, an important element in the industry of the USSR. It is one more example of the tendency to multiformity affording oppor-

tunity for ever-wider participation in the organised life of the community. The report of the State Planning Commission (Gosplan) in 1933 may rightly claim that "cooperative industry . . . in which the form of handicraft associations predominates . . . plays a great part in the industrial life of the country. It is in connection with state industry, and supplements it in a number of ways (supplies supplementary raw material, produces auxiliary materials, works up state raw materials, and semi-finished goods, produces articles for the general market, etc.). At the same time the industrial cooperative industry comes forward as the special means for the socialist remoulding of the small home worker, and, on the basis of the cooperative organisation of production, draws him into the common socialist channel of industrial development."¹

It is interesting to witness, in the Soviet Union, the successful adoption of a form of industrial organisation which has been extensively tried, during a whole century, in various capitalist countries, but seldom with any considerable or lasting success. Neither in Great Britain nor in France, neither in Germany nor in the United States, nor yet in any other country of advanced industrialism, have manufacturing associations of owner-producers, themselves jointly owning the actual product of their daily labour—that is to say, self-governing workshops—been able to make any considerable headway against systems of industrial production in which the working producers do not own the product of their labour, but are remunerated only by wages or salaries. Why is it different in the USSR? We suggest that the answer is to be found partly in the different environment provided in a country from which the profit-making capitalist has been entirely eliminated; and partly in the deliberate limitation and regulation of the sphere allotted to the cooperative associations. It is noticeable that the incops of the USSR seldom or never compete in the market with the state trusts or municipal enterprises. On the contrary, these latter are on the most friendly terms with the artels and incops, which are accorded a function of their own, duly recognised and specified in the General Plan, and are constantly being helped to fulfil it. In other countries the associated workers find themselves ruthlessly competed with and undercut even to the point of extinction, by the mass-production of gigantic establishments eager to obtain a monopoly of the markets. But experience shows that associations of producers in capitalist countries also succumb in another way. Here and there, very exceptionally, usually by creating a speciality of their own, or attaching to themselves a special clientele, they have successfully withstood the warfare of their capitalist rivals, even to the point of sometimes making considerable incomes for the cooperating members. These have then, almost invariably, sooner or later, limited their numbers, and shrunk into small partnerships, including shareholders who are not working members, and employing non-members at wages. Tempted by what are, in effect, high profits, they eventually become indistinguishable from the capitalist profit-makers

¹ *Summary of Results of the First Five-Year Plan* (Gosplan, 1933, p. 61).

themselves. In the Soviet Union this process of degeneration is watched and effectively prevented. When an incop shows signs of closing its body of members to recruits from outside, it finds itself unostentatiously required to fill up vacancies so as at least to keep up its number. When it becomes too prosperous, so that its members could share among themselves incomes markedly in excess of those secured by the trade unions for their own members in state industry, it is sharply reminded that this is against the law under which incops are formed. The excess profits may be carried to a reserve fund, or added to the insurance fund, but they may not be shared among the members. In most cases a new arrangement of prices takes place, either in the rates at which the incop buys its materials and components, or in the prices it obtains from the purchasers of its wares. When a manufacturing association of producers obtains most of its materials from the Government, and sells much of its product either to some branch of the Government, or to one or other department of *Centrosoyus*, it is not difficult to prevent the annual shares of the members in their own products from rising substantially above the earnings of similar workers in the state factories or the consumers' cooperatives. Moreover, the members are required always to work at piece-work rates, as the basis of the advances that they receive in lieu of wages : and there is no provision allowing payment of interest or profit to non-workers. Thus protected and safeguarded, the manufacturing associations of owner-producers in the USSR do no harm to the collectivist organisations, in the interstices of which they live. On the contrary, by the positive addition that they make to the aggregate of commodities and services brought to market, they benefit the community as a whole. And they can add the further boon of an ever-widening variety in the supply of the commodities and services that they contribute. It is a net gain to associate for handicraft production during the winter, the members of one or more collective farms ; or the dock labourers of an ice-bound port. Nor are the incops confined to production by manual labour. There are incops of artistic workers of more than one kind, including painters and sculptors. Associations of writers are formed to do their book production and publishing. There seems no reason why this form of organisation should not afford a socially useful means of livelihood to members of the "deprived" categories, who are admitted as members if they are prepared to work loyally with their hands ; and who might, at their option, unite among themselves to form new incops to render some special service calling for individual taste or skill, or not yet performed by any state or municipal enterprise.¹

(b) THE COLLECTIVE FARM

It is with a sudden acceleration of "Bolshevik tempo" that we pass, in the survey of the organisation of man as a producer, from the associa-

¹ There is reason to believe that somewhere in the neighbourhood of 4000 or 5000 persons belonging to the "deprived" categories are to be found among the membership

tions of owner-producers in industry to associations of owner-producers in agriculture.¹ In industry, as the reader will have realised, the new

of the incops, though they have not as yet formed societies of their own. The "social structure" of the membership of incops making returns on April 1, 1931 (these covering 719,000 members, or 45 per cent of the aggregate), was as under:

	City Incops, per cent	Village Incops, per cent
Former workmen or landless peasants	26.2	6.25
Members of kolkhosi	8.6	23.8
Poor peasants	12.7	23.95
Middle peasants and kulaks not employing hired labour	45.3	44.4
Former employees	5.4	0.6
Former kulaks employing hired labour	1.1	0.2
Kulaks, traders, employers and "deprived" persons	0.7	0.2
	100.0	100.00

(See *Ten Years of Incops in the USSR* (in Russian), by V. Gnoussov and I. P. Chernischer, Moscow, 1932, p. 24.)

¹ The information available on agriculture in the USSR, even apart from that only in Russian, is as great in bulk as it is uneven in accuracy or relevance. The history and the geographical conditions of Russian agriculture are elaborately described in the erudite monograph by Vladimir P. Timoshenko, *Agricultural Russia and the Wheat Problem* (Leland Stanford University, California, 1932, p. 571); also in *Rural Russia under the Old Régime*, by C. G. Robinson, 1932; *The Russian Peasantry*, by Stepniak, 1895, should also be read in this connection. The problem and its difficulties are well stated in the chapter "Russian Agriculture", by R. G. Tugwell, in *Soviet Russia in the Second Decade*, edited by Stuart Chase, R. Dunn, and R. G. Tugwell (New York, 1928). *Russia, Market or Menace*, by Thomas D. Campbell, 1932, gives a valuable report by an American expert on large-scale wheat-farming. Upon the peasant psychology, the four books by Maurice Hindus, *Broken Earth, Humanity Uprooted, Red Bread and The Great Offensive*, are invaluable. See also *The Russian Land*, by A. R. Williams (New York, 1928); *Collective Farm "Trud"*, a moving recital by a peasant woman, Eudoxia Pazukhina, of how she started a collective farm (London, 64 pp.); *Red Villages*, by J. A. Yakovlev (London, 1930, 128 pp.); and *Collective Farming in 1932* (Moscow, 1932), by the same. Stalin's own account of the policy from 1929 to 1931, together with the "model statutes", is given in *Building Collective Farms*, by J. Stalin (New York, 1931, 184 pp.). A valuable description of the internal organisation of the collective farms is given (in Russian) in *Distribution of Income in the Kolkhosi*, by N. Tataev (Partizdat, Moscow, 1932). A well-informed and generally adverse criticism will be found in the chapter on "Agriculture" by Professor Dr. Otto Auhagen, in *Soviet Economics*, edited by Dr. Gerhard Dobbert (1933). For recent hasty glimpses over a wide area, see the chapter on agriculture by John Morgan in *Twelve Studies in Soviet Russia*, edited by M. I. Cole (1933); *From Peasant to Collective Farmer*, by N. Buchwald and R. Bishop (1933); the five articles contributed to the *Manchester Guardian*, October 17-21, 1933, by its then correspondent W. H. Chamberlin; and *Reise durch hundert Kollektivwirtschaften*, by L. P. Boross (Moscow, 1932, 190 pp.). The publications in German are voluminous, and apparently of greater expertise and authority, if also more critical, than those in English. Those of Dr. Otto Schiller, the agricultural expert attached to the German embassy in Moscow, are published in *Berichte über Landwirtschaft*, the latest being (Sondesheft 79) *Die Krise der sozialistischen Landwirtschaft in der Sowjetunion* (1933, 82 pp.). See also his previous articles, "Die Kollektivisierung der russischen Landwirtschaft" and "Die landwirtschaftliche Probleme der Sowjetunion, 1931-1932". These lengthy and valuable reports, although very critical, do not, in our opinion, support the adverse conclusions of the pamphlet entitled *Collectivised Agriculture in the Soviet Union*, published by the School of Slavonic Studies (London, 1934, 32 pp.).

and predominant type is the trade union, including all kinds and grades of workers by hand or by brain. In agriculture, though state farms, with the appropriate trade unions, are increasing in number and variety, it is the millions of individual owner-producers associated in collective farms that occupy the centre of the picture. Moreover, whilst the development of the kustar artels into industrial cooperative societies (incops) has been pursued without serious controversy, and without a trace of civil disorder, the advent of the collective farm (kolkhos), as the pattern organisation for the vast hordes of peasant cultivators on one-sixth of the earth's surface, has been accompanied, not merely by heated controversy, both public and private, but also, among the peasants themselves, by widespread sullen resentment, and not a little recalcitrance, which cannot be assumed to have yet (1934) been completely overcome. Indeed, it might almost be said that the partially enforced collectivisation and mechanisation of agriculture during 1929-1934 represents the final stage, not yet completed, of the rural uprisings of 1917, that effectually liquidated the private landlord.¹ The question inevitably arises, why did the Soviet Government of 1928, in face of prolonged and heated discussion within the Communist Party itself, attempt so drastic, and, as it seemed, so hazardous an experiment. The answer is that the situation was such as, within their framework of reference, to leave no other course open to them.

The Unproductive Peasant

Candid observers of the Russian mujik during the past half-century, whilst differing in their estimates of his "soulful" qualities, agree in the testimony that as an agriculturist he has hitherto been, in the mass, either per head or per hectare, the least productive of all the peasantries of Europe. Whether as the result of nature or of nurture; of climate or of race; of centuries of oppression and illiteracy; or of generations of virtual slavery and peonage; or of a religion that imposed no code of conduct and amounted to little more than propitiatory rites, the typical mujik—when not under coercion by landlord, tax-collector, usurer or employer—failed to grow enough food, taking bad years with good, even to maintain his own family in full health and strength.² And the "bad

More impartial, and therefore specially cogent, is the able historical summary contained in two issues of the *Political Science Quarterly* (New York, January and June 1934), entitled "Collectivisation of Agriculture in the Soviet Union", by W. Ladejinsky. Other recent works are *Die Getreidewirtschaft in den Trockengebieten Russlands*, by B. Brutzkus, W. von Poletika and A. Von Ugrimoff; and *Das Agrarexperiment Sowjetrusslands*, by Dr. H. Zorner. *Die Bilanz des ersten Fünfjahresplanes der Sowjetwirtschaft*, by Dr. Otto Auhagen (Breslau, 1933, 75 pp.) gives great place to agriculture.

¹ Three substantial books recently published should be added, especially as each author takes a different view of what one of them has termed the "first revolution in agriculture anywhere since the bourgeois industrial revolution made the serf a peasant and a farmer". These are *Russia's Iron Age*, by W. H. Chamberlin, 1935; *Soviet Journey*, by Louis Fischer, 1935; and *Economic Planning in Soviet Russia*, by Boris Brutzkus.

² Let us, in fairness, briefly recapitulate some of his difficulties. His holding was, on the average, minute in area; and in the repeated redistributions, actually becoming smaller year after year. It was usually made up of numerous small strips, often miles

years" recurred with fatal frequency. During the first half of the nineteenth century, from 1800 to 1854, there are reported to have been no fewer than 35 years in which there was a more or less serious failure of the crops. In the 20 years from 1891 to 1910, there were only 4 good harvests, with 13 poor harvests, and 3 famine years. During the first decade of Soviet rule, 1918-1927, there were only 3 years of good harvests, 5 years of poor harvests and 2 famine years. This habitual unproductivity of the Russian peasant was masked, to the uncritical observer, by the fact that, so long as the landlord was in a position to exact his rent, the tax collector his taxes and the village usurer and employer the profits that they could squeeze out of their impecunious neighbours, some grain was always sent to market, even if the village starved. Moreover, a considerable proportion of the aggregate area, was, down to 1917, cultivated in the large farms of the improving landowners, and in the smaller but often substantial holdings of the kulaks, who had "added field to field" by their oppression of the poorer villagers. Thus, so long as the landowners remained, and the tax collector used force, and the kulaks' characteristic "thrift" was unrestrained, there could be, in all but the worst years, not only an adequate supply for the relatively small city populations but also, occasionally, a substantial export. Meanwhile the poor peasant was being increasingly "driven off the land"; and in bad years—during the past century, every other year—the infants, the aged, and often the nursing mothers were dying by thousands of inanition, typhus or enteric. We shall describe in a subsequent chapter¹ how frequently, in the present century, the peasants rose against their most obvious oppressors, the landlords; whose mansions they burnt, whose stores they plundered and whose land they divided. This almost continuous *jacquerie* was not the work of the Bolsheviks, who were not yet in office. Nor did it result in any substantial or lasting improvement in the condition of the mass of poor peasants, or in any increase of marketable foodstuffs. It did not even enlarge the area of the average peasant holding, nor give him an iron plough, nor any horse or ox to draw the plough. In 1917, with the swarming back of the men from the armies, and the workers from the factories, all demanding shares of the land of the village to which they belonged, the redistribution of the large estates merely increased the number of starveling peasant holdings from some fourteen or fifteen millions in 1916 to some twenty-four or twenty-five millions in 1926.

apart, which had to be cultivated according to the common practice of his neighbours. He had hardly ever any adequate equipment (one-third of all the holdings had no iron plough, but only a wooden stick; at least one-fourth had no horse or ox with which to plough). Manuring of any kind was at a minimum, and artificial fertilisers were scarcely known. There was next to no rotation of crops. The minimum of labour was spent on weeding. Reaping was by the sickle, and thrashing by the flail; marketing practically limited to the passing visits of the grain dealer. To sum up, as compared with the peasant of France or Flanders, South Germany or the Tyrol, the majority of the Russian mujiks were, in 1900, still in the fourteenth century.

¹ See Part II., Chapter VII., "The Liquidation of the Landlord and the Capitalist".

The Crisis in Foodstuffs

Ever since the Bolshevik seizure of power, the maintenance of the food supply for the population of the cities and the Red Armies had been a constant preoccupation of the Soviet Government. This perpetual anxiety as to how the people could be saved from hunger, to which the British and French Governments in times of peace never gave a thought, was not directly due to any socialist measure taken by Lenin and his colleagues. On the contrary, it sprang from their inability, during a whole decade, to deal with the extreme individualism and primitive conditions of Russian peasant agriculture. During the years of War Communism, all the grain that could be discovered was simply taken by force for the feeding of the Red and the White Armies, which naturally led to the peasants limiting their cultivation either to what sufficed to feed themselves or what they saw their way to hide. The situation became desperate enough to drive Lenin to the New Economic Policy of 1921, under which a revival of limited capitalist enterprise, with market prices left free to be settled by "supply and demand", encouraged the kulaks to bring out their hidden grain in exchange for the commodities that they desired. It could not, however, avert the serious famine of 1921, which was the result, not merely of adverse weather conditions, but also of the widespread desolation wrought by the Civil Wars. The subsequent opening of the "scissors"—the disparity between the exchange values of primary products and manufactured articles—had grave consequences on the peasant mentality.¹ The great bulk of the peasantry, whether poor or relatively prosperous, had supported the Bolsheviks in overthrowing the Provisional Government, because this collapse of authority enabled the peasants, including the kulaks, to drive away the landowners and share their estates among the villagers. On similar grounds the peasantry had everywhere eventually supported the Red Armies against the Whites, because these latter threatened to reinstate the landlords in their possessions. But once that danger had disappeared, the peasants, poor, middle or kulak, now imagining themselves proprietors of the land they tilled, demurred to parting with their produce to feed the cities, even at free market prices, so long as these prices did not enable them to obtain the manufactured commodities they desired at something like the old customary rates. The peasants, moreover, even the very considerable proportion of them to whom the revolution had given land for nothing, resented, like peasant proprietors all over the world, the levying on them of any direct taxes.

¹ The obstinate divergence between the general level of exchange values for household commodities and that of exchange values for grain—the persistent wide opening of the "scissors"—was doubtless aggravated by the determination of the Soviet Government, for good and sufficient reasons of general policy, to press on the erection of new factories and the increase of machinery, rather than the immediate production of additional clothing and household necessities. But it must be remembered that the phenomenon of markedly higher exchange values for manufactures than for primary products has been, since 1921, common to all the world, irrespective of communist or any other policy, or even of currency systems or fiscal devices.

Nor did the marked development, in the village, of the characteristic peasant vices of greed and cunning, varied by outbursts of drunkenness and recurrent periods of sloth, produce anything like general prosperity, nor even any common improvement in agricultural methods. What became apparent was that the peasant, formerly servile, was becoming rebellious.

Mr. Maurice Hindus, who was born and bred in the Russian village, vividly describes his own astonishment at discovering, in a village meeting, the typically rebellious mujik.¹ The chairman of the village soviet had been speaking to an audience which gave him rapt attention. "Of a sudden, somewhere from the fringe of the audience, there boomed out a deep voice as startling as a thunderclap. 'Words, words, words—only words!' It was an elderly mujik speaking. Barefooted, bareheaded, with a flowing beard and in a soiled linen shirt, he raised his arms high as though to quiet the murmur of protest that his interruption had called forth. 'All for the benefit of the foreign visitor,' he drawled mockingly. 'Showing off. Look at me, *inostranetz*,' and he pounded his fists on his bulging chest. 'I am the truth, the sole putrid truth in this beastly land.' Denunciations hailed on him from every direction, but he paid no heed to them. 'I am sixty-five years of age. The soviets did give me land, but what shall I do with it? Can I eat land? I have no horse and what can I do on land without a horse?' The chairman himself, and several of his associates, sought to quiet him, but he raced on unperturbed. 'In the old days,' he shouted, raising his voice above the tumult that had broken out, 'we had a Tsar, landlords, exploiters, and yet I could always buy a horse if mine died, and boots too, and all the calico I could pay for. And now there is no Tsar, there are no landlords, there are no exploiters, and yet—no horse, no boots, no calico, nothing. Remember that, stranger.'

"I stared at the mujik, at the disturbed chairman, at the heaving mob. It seemed so unbelievable that anyone in Russia would dare to lift his voice in such haughty disdain, in such flaming defiance of the proletarian dictators—least of all a mujik. I remembered him so well in the old days, this lowly miserable creature of a mujik. How meek he seemed in the presence of officials. How humbly he would bow before a man in a uniform, or sometimes only in city clothes. With what alacrity he would remove his hat before anyone he deemed his superior. Shy he was, this unwashed, hairy, big-boned mujik, and cautious in his choice of words, in voicing a grievance, lest he give offence to the man representing *pravitelstvo*—government—and when he noted in the expression of the official's face a sign of annoyance or disapproval he shrank back, apologised, begged for forgiveness. In his heart he may have cherished only hate for the official, but when face to face with him he was all meekness and docility. But now in this desolate village, I witnessed the extraordinary spectacle of a bedraggled, mud-bespattered mujik, actually denouncing and haranguing officials—all government—with no more restraint or compunction than as if he were scolding his son or whipping his horse. It seemed so terribly

¹ *Humanity Uprooted*, by Maurice Hindus, 1929, p. 149.

unreal, so unbelievably heroic!" This mujik proved to be typical of many in the succeeding years.

Matters were made not better but worse by the growing prosperity in the village of the more thrifty and more industrious, but also the more cunning and more oppressive of the agriculturists, to whom the opprobrious name of kulak (fist) was applied. The inequality of conditions, to which Stolypin's reforms had given an impetus, was not removed by the multiplication of starveling holdings and not lessened by the monopoly of resources by a minority of hated usurers. Though the kulaks might be climbing steadily into capitalists, the army of the landless was rapidly growing. What was, however, most serious of all was that the national food supply was rendered thereby not less but even more precarious than before. Whenever the harvest was relatively good, practically all the peasants consumed a larger and took to market a smaller proportion of the yield. In years of threatened scarcity, the kulaks had the cities at their mercy.

Experimental Improvements

It would, however, be unfair to the mujik, and an inaccurate description of the dilemma of the statesman, to ignore the various experiments in agricultural organisation which had been, in one locality or another, pretty extensively tried between 1917 and 1927. In the first place, there had been, among the more prosperous of the peasants, a great extension of agricultural cooperation of the ordinary type. Voluntary cooperative associations of independent peasants abounded in 1927, to the aggregate number, it was reported, of some 80,000 societies for several dozens of different purposes with literally millions of members.¹ This once powerful voluntary movement has now almost entirely ceased to exist. Its place has been taken by the so-called kolkhosi, or collective farms, in which the members united either the whole or some of their resources in capital and labour, in order to share among themselves as copartners an increasing output. Of these collective farms, of which some thousands had spontaneously come into existence between 1918 and 1927, with varying degrees of success, we may distinguish three types. There was, first, the association of members merely to the extent of combining their labour forces for joint tillage; for working in company in ploughing, sowing and harvesting a particular crop upon their several holdings of land, and sharing the proceeds among themselves. A second type, usually styled

¹ This agricultural progress had started, under Stolypin's reforms, even before the Revolution; but after 1917 it was greatly extended. By 1927 there were, in the USSR, no fewer than 80,000 agricultural cooperative societies, of nearly fifty different kinds—credit societies, marketing societies, creameries, societies for purchasing machinery and forty different kinds of specialist societies for developing particular crops or animal products. These 80,000 entirely voluntary cooperative societies numbered, in the aggregate, ten million members (many in more than one society). There were nearly 10,000 kolkhosi of the joint labour type, some 10,000 of the artel type, and more than a thousand communes. But all this enterprise, much of which is now superseded by the systematic organisation of sovkhosi and kolkhosi, left two-thirds of the peasant population almost untouched.

an artel,¹ was that of the association in which were united not merely the labour force but also the ownership of the capital employed (the land-holdings, the implements and the farm buildings), but only in so far as concerned the production of cereals or other specified crops, sometimes also with a common flock or herd; leaving in individual occupation and management the dwelling-houses, the garden grounds, the poultry, the bees, the domestic pig and sometimes a cow, for the particular care and profit of the several families. The third type was called the commune. In this, not only the fields and buildings connected with cereal cultivation, but also all the other rural enterprises, were owned and administered in common, and the whole proceeds were shared, together with the dwelling-houses and all the improvements and amenities for common enjoyment that the settlement could afford. Some of these communes, in various parts of the USSR, had already proved remarkably successful over periods of several years, reaching a level of productiveness, and sometimes of amenity, amounting to what the western world would deem civilisation, superior not only to the average of the peasantry, but even to most of the collective farms of the artel type. It appeared, however, that the commune, to be permanently successful, required in its necessarily voluntary membership a considerably higher level of personal character, and also of managerial capacity, than other forms of village settlement, a level which could not reasonably be expected to become universal, or even to be commonly attained within a generation. If it was necessary to obtain, over the USSR as a whole, any considerable increase in the quantity of marketable grain even in good years—still more, if it was imperative, in the interest of the whole community, to ensure that there should be no actual shortage in the bad years that were certain to come—it did not seem possible for the government to sit down with folded hands to await the slow and gradual extension, to the entire peasantry, either of agricultural cooperative societies or of collective farming of any type whatsoever. Some way of quickening the tempo and enlarging the area of agricultural improvement had to be found. On the other hand, the state farms (sovkhosi), which the Soviet Government had managed to retain in its own administration, and had been for nearly a decade struggling to cultivate exclusively with wage-labourers, had so far failed to produce, after their staffs had been fed, even in good years, more than a small net addition to the aggregate of marketable grain. It seemed impossible, in the near future, to transform these "grain factories" into an effective and, in bad years, a certain source of the nation's food supply.

¹ The form of the artel was used for cooperative associations in agriculture (apparently for the first time) towards the end of 1895 by N. V. Levitsky, in the province of Kherson, afterwards spreading to Simbirsk, and some parts of Siberia, not in all cases extending to joint cultivation, and mainly for joint purchase of implements and other necessities, and generally the use of cooperative credit (*La Russie à la fin du 19^e siècle*, par M. W. de Kovalesky, 1900, p. 656). In its simplest form, the association for joint tillage, it reminds the student of the voluntary working "bee" of the American pioneer farmers, except that the latter deals successively with individual holdings, instead of simultaneously with all of them.

The Prolonged Discussion as to Policy

The problem for the Soviet statesmen was desperately difficult. It may surprise those who assume the existence of a dictatorship, and deny that of free speech, to learn that, for nearly three years (1925-1928), the issue was the subject of heated public controversy in articles, pamphlets and books, widely circulating in large editions, as well as prolonged committee debate in the Central Executive Council and within the Communist Party. There were those (such as Trotsky) who declared that the growth and development of the kulaks (here meaning merely the more prosperous minority of peasants, who employed wage labour) was, by rebuilding capitalism, endangering, if not destroying, the whole achievement of the Revolution. This faction demanded the most drastic measures for the suppression of the kulaks, but failed to make clear by what means it proposed to increase the agricultural output of the minute holdings of the majority of poor peasants otherwise than by the slow spread of one or other form of voluntary cooperation. There were those who laid more stress on the multiplication of state farms (sovkhosi), employing labourers at wages as in the state factories, which, it was said, would prove the only efficient and reliable source of the foodstuffs required. But no one showed how to develop state farms at a rate that would avert the peril of mass starvation. Accordingly, those for whom Bukharin and even A. I. Rykov were for some time the spokesmen urged that, as the state farms would take a long time to develop to the extent required, and as it was hopeless to look for agricultural improvements to the great mass of tiny holdings, it was only the more energetic and enlightened of the peasants, who had already obtained the use of relatively considerable holdings of land, with superior equipment and improved agricultural systems, who could promptly make any appreciable contribution to the increased aggregate production that was immediately needed. These, therefore, it was said, though often oppressive kulaks, should be encouraged and assisted to enlarge their enterprises, as the only available means of national safety, even at the price of temporarily reducing many more of the poor peasants to the position of wage labourers.¹

The Policy of Universal Collectivisation

In the end, the Central Executive Committee of the All-Union Congress of Soviets (TSIK), in conjunction with the Central Committee of the Communist Party, hammered out during 1927 an alternative policy, for which, we think, Stalin deserves most of the credit. As proclaimed by him in 1928, the decision of these committees prescribed, for immediate execution, nothing less than a second agrarian revolution, in which the whole of the

¹ It is interesting to notice that Stepniak (*The Russian Peasantry*, 1895), though hating the kulak, could at that date see no better prospect for the peasantry as a whole than being driven off the land by the kulak class, in order that, in some distant future, they might, as landless proletarians, be inspired to revolution. This, too (though without contemplation of even a future revolution), was virtually the line of Stolypin's great agricultural reforms of 1907-1910.

individual peasantry would be transformed within less than a decade. This was to unite (a) the utmost rapid development of the state farms (sovkhosi) with (b) a far more extensive gradual combination of the poorer and middle peasants, under government persuasion, in collective farms (kolkhosi) of the artel type;¹ in both cases in order that (c) agriculture might be universally mechanised by tractors and harvesting combines to be supplied by the government; whilst (d) the output upon the enlarged farms could be further increased by rotation of crops and the use of fertilisers. Practically the whole of the individual peasantry was to disappear, and to become workers on relatively large amalgamated areas, either as cooperative owner-producers (on kolkhosi) or (in sovkhosi) as farm labourers at wages. Only in this way, it was suggested, could the twenty-five or twenty-six million tiny holdings be merged within the necessary time into a few hundred thousand relatively large farms on which the use of machinery would be practicable. Only in this way, it was urged, could the whole peasant population, and not merely an exceptional minority, be raised to the comprehension of improved systems of agriculture. Meanwhile, the kulak was to be taxed more severely, denied the use of the new government tractors, and harried in every possible way, with a view to his complete "liquidation" as a class, within a few years. It is this policy which has, since 1928, covered all parts of the USSR with collective farms, formed by peasants who have, nominally voluntarily, but often after intense propaganda, and at times under considerable local pressure, merged their little holdings in larger units, belonging to themselves jointly instead of to themselves individually. In this way, there has been created, for agriculture (at the cost of driving out the universally hated kulaks and the recalcitrant Ukrainians or Don Cossacks by tens or even hundreds of thousands of families), something analogous to the kustar artels, or cooperative societies of owner-producers in manufacturing industry, that we described in the preceding section.

We may pause to consider the magnitude and the difficulty of this transformation. To convert, within less than a decade, even two-thirds of a population of 120 millions of peasantry steeped in ignorance, suspicion and obstinacy, accustomed for centuries to individual cultivation of the little holdings that they now deemed their own, with all the cunning and greed that such a system develops, into public-spirited cooperators working

¹ See, for instance, the explicit descriptions of the three types in "Dizzy with Success", reprinted from *Pravda* of March 2, 1930, in *Leninism*, by Joseph Stalin, vol. ii. pp. 283-284, 1933. "Is it the Associations for Joint Tillage? No, it is not. The Associations for Joint Tillage, in which the means of production are not yet socialised, represent a stage in the collective farm movement which has already been passed. Is it, perhaps, the agricultural communes? No, it is not the agricultural communes. The communes are still isolated phenomena in the collective farm movement. The conditions are not yet ripe for the agricultural communes as the predominant form, in which not only all production but distribution also is socialised. The key link in the collective farm movement, its predominant form at the present moment, which we have now to seize hold of, is the agricultural artel. . . . It is on this that the 'Model Statute' for collective farms—the final text of which is being published to-day—is based."

upon a prescribed plan for a common product to be equitably shared among themselves, might well have been deemed hopelessly impracticable. At least, it would have been said, by anyone acquainted with a peasant population, that such a transformation—the “real agrarian revolution in Russia”¹—must require a whole generation of persistent effort.

The Struggle for Efficiency in the Kolkhosi

The past five years have, indeed, seen a tireless struggle in nearly all parts of the USSR, to induce the gigantic membership of the kolkhosi, which had often been achieved only by considerable governmental pressure, to remain loyally in membership, and to work their cooperative enterprises with honesty and adequate efficiency. At first, by widespread propaganda and reckless promises of tractors and harvesters, improved ploughs and selected seeds, the process of conversion was altogether too quick. Whilst only 20 per cent of collectivisation had been contemplated during the first year, something like 55 per cent was attained. For so rapid a transformation the Soviet Government was not prepared; and more than half the new collective farms could not be given the aid of tractors. The zeal of the government agents had led, on the one hand, to something very like compulsion of the hesitating peasants to join the collectives; and, on the other, to unduly large and repeated levies upon such of them as were successful, representing what was claimed to be the government share of the harvest. The middle peasants, feeling themselves condemned to a merger that was repugnant to them, in many instances slaughtered, in 1929–1930, their cattle and horses, sheep and pigs, rather than bring them into the common stock.² So widespread was the outcry that the central committees were driven to instruct Stalin to issue his manifesto entitled “Dizzy with Success”, in which the zeal of the government agents was rebuked; the voluntary character of membership of the collectives was emphasised; permission to withdraw was conceded; and proper consideration of the varying stock brought in by different members was insisted on. Nevertheless the animals continued to be slaughtered and the total membership to fall off. Partial failures of crop in 1931 and 1932 deepened the discontent. This was especially

¹ “The truth is, the real agrarian revolution in Russia occurred towards the end of 1927, as an outcome of the enactments of the 15th Congress of the Party” (“Agriculture”, by Professor Dr. Otto Auhagen, in *Soviet Economics*, edited by Dr. Gerhard Dobbert (1933), p. 212).

The 15th Party Congress did, in fact, adopt a report from the Central Committee containing the following passage: “Where is the way out? The way out is in the passing of small disintegrated peasant farms into large-scale amalgamated farms, on the basis of communal tillage of the soil; in passing to collective tillage of the soil on the basis of the new higher technique. The way out is to amalgamate the petty and tiny peasant farms gradually but steadily, not by means of pressure but by example and conviction, into large-scale undertakings on the basis of communal, fraternal collective tillage of the soil, supplying agricultural machinery and tractors, applying scientific methods for the intensification of agriculture. *There is no other way out.*”

² The magnitude of this holocaust of live-stock is seldom realised. The following table shows that, in one year, 1929–1930, more than sixty million animals were slaughtered, being one-quarter of the whole; and in the course of the next three years, 1931–1933,

the case in some parts of the once-favoured community of the Don Cossacks, where the loss of the special privileges, in which a large proportion of the population had shared under the Tsars, was still resented. The recalcitrance took on the gravest aspect in some parts of the Ukraine, where the aspirations of some of the intelligentsia after national independence had been kept alive by continuous incitement and occasional secret emissaries from the Ukrainian exiles at Paris and Prague. The whole organised movement for an independent Ukraine was, we are told, from 1928 onwards, directed towards stimulating the peasants to resist collectivisation. The forms taken by this resistance, it has been frankly stated by one of the Ukrainian *émigrés*, "have greatly varied. At first there were mass disturbances in the kolkhosi, or else the communist officials and their agents were killed; but later a system of passive resistance was favoured, which aimed at the systematic frustration of the Bolshevik plans for the sowing and gathering of the harvest. The peasants and workers, seeing the ruthless export by their Bolshevik masters of all food produce, began to take steps to save themselves from starvation in the winter time, and to grasp at any means of fighting against the hated foreign rule. This is the main reason for the wholesale hoarding of grain and the thefts from the fields—offences which, if detected, are punishable by death. The peasants are passive resisters everywhere; but in Ukrainia the resistance has assumed the character of a national struggle. *The opposition of the Ukrainian population caused the failure of the grain-storing plan of 1931, and still more so, that of 1932.* The catastrophe of 1932 was the hardest blow that Soviet Ukraine had to face since the famine of 1921–1922. The autumn and spring sowing campaigns both failed. Whole tracts were left unsown. In addition, when the crop was being gathered last year, it happened that, in many areas, especially in the south, 20, 40

over eighty millions more. In 1933, the total live-stock was less than four-ninths of the total in 1929.

LIVE-STOCK IN THE USSR

(In millions of head)

	1916	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933
Horses	35.1	34.0	30.2	26.2	19.6	16.6
Large-horned cattle	58.9	68.1	52.5	47.9	40.7	38.6
Sheep and goats	115.2	147.2	108.8	77.7	52.1	50.6
Pigs	20.3	20.9	13.6	14.4	11.6	12.2
	229.5	270.2	205.1	166.2	124.0	118.0

(Stalin's report on the work of the Central Committee of the Communist Party in the Soviet Union, in *Proceedings* (in Russian) of the *Seventeenth Congress of the CPSU*, 1933, p. 30.) See, in confirmation, *Die Krise der sozialistischen Landwirtschaft in der Sowjetunion*, by Dr. Otto Schiller, 1933; and *Economic Planning in Soviet Russia*, Boris Brutzkus, 1935, p. 211.

This colossal slaughter, repeated in successive years, has been subsequently excused as having been due to lack of wheat or oats for fodder, owing to government exactions. But why did they slaughter sheep and pigs, and even goats?

and even 50 per cent was left in the fields, and was either not collected at all or was ruined in the threshing."¹

Towards the close of 1932, when the extent of this continuous deliberate sabotage had become manifest; when the too persistent rains of the summer had ruined the prospect of an abundant harvest, even where the agricultural operations had been loyally carried out; and when it was realised that the reserves had been specially depleted owing to the measures taken in order to stave off a Japanese invasion, the food situation again looked desperate. There is reason to believe that those in authority did not know where to turn. Finally, in January 1933, Stalin announced an administrative campaign, designed to reach the nerve-centres of every one of the 225,000 collective farms; a campaign which for boldness of conception and vigour in execution, as well as in the magnitude of its operations, appears to us unparalleled in the peace-time annals of any government. The desperate situation had to be saved. And, aided fortuitously by good crops in 1933 and 1934, it was saved. How this was accomplished will appear in the following pages.

The Magnitude of the Problem

We must first emphasise the magnitude of the problem. The rush of some seventy million people into the collective farms had not been accompanied by any sufficient provision of agricultural machinery, seeds and fertilisers even for those who were loyal; and certainly not by any adequate means of supervision and control of such of them as might be disloyal or recalcitrant. The total number of collective farms of all types in the USSR, which was less than 20,000 in 1927, had grown by the first quarter of 1933 to 211,000, actually cultivating about 85 million hectares, or an average for each enterprise of over 400 hectares (1000 acres).² The total number of households is variously stated as between 14 and 15 millions, making a population of some 70 millions, and giving an average for each collective farm of between 65 and 70 households. We may contrast these statistics of collective farms with those of the village soviets (selosoviets). The number of village soviets in the USSR is about 70,000, governing some 600,000 villages and hamlets—thus there are, on an average, three collective farms in the area of each village soviet. But as in some districts the collective farms are still scanty, the average per village soviet in the rest of the USSR must be much higher than three; and, as some of the areas of the village soviets have more than ten times the population of others, there must be areas under a single village soviet which each contain six or even a dozen collective farms. Collective farming "is most complete in the rich grain districts of southern and south-eastern Russia, and least advanced in the northern provinces, with their

¹ "Ukrainia under Bolshevik Rule", by Isaac Mazepa, in *Slavonic Review*, January 1934, pp. 342-343. The writer was Premier of the Ukrainian Republic of 1919, and is now professor at the Ukrainian Agricultural College at Prague.

² The Moscow Narodny Bank's *Monthly Review* (vol. vi., April 1933, No. 4) gives a convenient summary of the statistics showing the number of peasant households united

poorer soil, and in some of the autonomous republics inhabited by non-Russian nationalities”.

The State Machinery for the Control of the Collective Farms

(a) The New People's Commissar

The new policy of universal collectivisation involved a far-reaching reorganisation of the machinery of government.¹ The first step was the establishment of federal control. Hitherto agriculture had been a subject retained by the several Union or constituent republics, in each of which (and also in the autonomous republics) there had been, since 1923, a People's Commissar of Agriculture, responsible only to his own Sovnarkom (cabinet of ministers) and central executive committee. There were now appointed by the USSR Government two new People's Commissars to deal with agriculture throughout the whole Union. One of these, the People's Commissar for state farms (sovkhosi), took complete command in collective farms and the percentage they form of the total households in each of the principal agricultural areas in the USSR, in the first quarter of 1933 :

Area	No. of Peasant Households	Percentage of Total
<i>Producing areas (areas which produce a surplus over their own requirements) :</i>		
Ukraine	3,100,000	70
Northern Caucasus	960,000	70
Lower Volga	660,000	80
Central Volga	930,000	78
Urals	700,000	68
Western Siberia	750,000	63
Central Black Soil Region	1,300,000	68
Bashkiria	350,000	68
Crimea	65,000	80
<i>Consuming areas (areas which do not produce enough for their own requirements) :</i>		
Moscow Province	650,000	55
Western Provinces	530,000	47
Gorky (Nizhni-Novgorod)	600,000	45
White Russian Republic	330,000	45

“The average cultivated area per collective farm is over 400 hectares, which compares favourably with that of well-to-do peasants who, in the past, used to cultivate from 15 to 20 hectares per household. The total number of collective farms now exceeds 211,000.”

¹ This “radical change in agricultural administration” was described by Kalinin at the Third Session of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR (TSIK) in January 1933. “Formerly”, he said, “we had only the national People's Commissariats [for agriculture, in each of the seven Constituent Republics], which were each adapted to the local peculiarities of a scattered rural economy which they assisted to improve. Everything was reversed with collectivisation [in collective and state farms], which raised the last layers of rural backwardness with the strengthening of agriculture and the coming of tractors and combines. The old [and during the Revolution one year counts as ten] organisation structure had outlived its usefulness. The production of agricultural goods was rapidly mechanised, and this required more centralised direction on an All-Union scale” (*Moscow Daily News*, January 26, 1933).

of these wherever they were or might hereafter be established. The other, the People's Commissar for Agriculture, was to deal both with the collective farms (kolkhosi) of all types, and with the still surviving individual peasantry. The existing People's Commissars of Agriculture in the several constituent or autonomous republics were not removed, nor were their offices abolished. What happened was that, at one fell swoop, the whole score of them were stripped of a large part of their autonomy; passing suddenly from governing, as they chose, "non-unified" departments (like that of health), which were responsible solely to themselves, to presiding over "unified" departments (like that of finance), in which they had to follow the plans and execute all the orders received from the USSR Peoples' Commissar, and in which their local staffs were required to render loyal service both to the local People's Commissar, and also to his superior, the USSR People's Commissar.

(b) The New Agricultural Departments

In each of the constituent republics, there had existed a Land Department, descended from the various Land Committees which were supposed to direct the division among the peasantry of the land of the monasteries and the Tsar's family, and those estates from which the landlords had been expropriated. These offices had become somnolent with the completion of the division, and actually fulfilled few functions. They were now reorganised into Agricultural Departments, having in charge the supervision alike of the independent peasantry and of the rapidly growing kolkhosi of various types. These departments had much to do with the adjustment of boundaries of the several kolkhosi, and with the settlement of disputes. Their whole work was brought under the supervision and the orders primarily of the People's Commissar of Agriculture of the republic; but with the obligation of loyally carrying out any commands and instructions of the USSR People's Commissar.

In the autonomous republics, as in the oblasts or krais of the RSFSR and the Ukraine, there are also Agricultural Departments subordinate to those of the several constituent republics. In the case, however, of the very extensive oblasts or krais of the RSFSR, such as those of East and West Siberia and the Urals, and in the case of the larger among the autonomous republics, it became the practice for their Agricultural Departments to be in direct communication with the USSR People's Commissar of Agriculture at Moscow, where there had been a special kolkhos centre, obtaining all statistical and other information about the kolkhosi throughout the whole USSR. This kolkhos centre became a part of the new USSR Commissariat of Agriculture.

Beneath the oblast or krai, or autonomous republic, there was also a Land Department for each rayon. These had apparently wholly gone to sleep, to be rudely stirred by Kaganovich at the Seventeenth Party Congress. "Our rayon Land Departments", he said, "are in a state of neglect, they are in an interregnum as it were, they do not seem to be

able to grasp what their functions are. Very often the planning work of the rayon Land Department resolves itself into their mechanically distributing the production quotas among the collective farms without taking into account their traction facilities, their labour power, and their economic possibilities. The rayon Land Departments must be organised in such a way that they may know the situation in every collective farm.”¹

(c) Supervision by the Village Soviets

Then the village soviets (selosoviets) were made to realise that it was an important part of their duty to watch the administration of all the collective farms within their several areas, so as to prevent them from going so far wrong as to threaten a failure of supply. It was pointed out that the kolkhos, even more than the individual peasant, owed a positive duty to the state, in the form of the utmost production of foodstuffs on the nationalised land that had been entrusted in usufruct to each little community; and that the performance of this duty had to be enforced. The president of each village soviet was reminded that he was personally responsible for the proper conduct of each collective farm within the area under his charge, so far at least as using all his personal influence was concerned, with instructions to report without delay when he perceived anything going wrong.

The Soviet Hierarchy grips the Collective Farm

This soviet hierarchy now took hold of the administration of the collective farms. From one end of the USSR to the other, every kolkhos had to be firmly gripped—to be merely supervised, aided and praised, if its agriculture was successful; to be admonished and warned and threatened, if the sowing, the weeding, the reaping, the threshing and the warehousing of the grain were not loyally and efficiently conducted; and in all cases to be helped and instructed and supplied with seed, fertilisers and machinery. The problem, Kaganovich had pointed out as early as 1930, was to bring the state machinery as close as possible to the villages and hamlets, of which there were, as we have mentioned, no fewer than 600,000. “At present”, he continued, “the centre of gravity of collective farm construction has been shifted to the rayon. Here are gathered up the threads of collective farm organisation and all other economic work of the villages, cooperative and soviet, credit and supply. Are the rayon organisations sufficiently equipped with the necessary workers to deal with all this varied work? There can be no doubt that they are extremely inadequately supplied with workers. Where is the way out?”

What was done in 1930 was to decree the abolition of the okrug (the intermediate council between the oblast and the rayon); and to distribute its staff among the congresses of soviets of both the latter authorities. In addition some 25,000 selected Party members were sent to

¹ *Proceedings of Seventeenth Congress CPSU*, speech of Kaganovich, pp. 67-69.

"the agricultural front". This, however, proved during 1931 and 1932, even when the active help of the village soviet could be secured, insufficient to watch over the administration of every collective farm.

The Machine and Tractor Stations

An effective lever for lifting to prosperity every collective farm that was not deliberately wrecking its own agriculture was presently found in the Machine and Tractor Station (MTS), in which the supply of machinery to the farms had gradually been concentrated. Between 1930 and 1933 the number of these M. and T. stations was increased to over 2600, with nearly 700 repairing shops and 80,000 tractors;¹ their repairing shops were raised to a high level of efficiency; and their administration was made the means of persistent supervision of all the fifty to one hundred farms within the area, averaging about fifteen square miles, that each station served. Their activities were described by an adverse critic in the following terms. "The erection of Machine [and] Tractor Stations, the first of which was set up in the Odessa region in 1927, had a significant influence on the subsequent developments. These stations may (each) have on hand as many as 100 tractors and more, together with all the necessary accessories, as well as threshing-machines, repair shops and technical personnel. Each station undertakes to draw up agreements with near-by village communities or collectives on the basis of a share in the harvest in exchange for technical assistance. To-day these stations are the so-called heavy artillery of the 'forced' collectivisation; they are established by order of the government; and instructions are given to ensure that the peasants within the working radius of each station are linked up with them. It is arranged for each station to have a maximum field of operation of 50,000 to 60,000 hectares. For the year 1930 there were 313 stations in operation; by 1931 this figure had increased to 1400, and in 1932 it is planned to have 3100. One-third of the summer and winter sowings in 1932, roughly about 48 million hectares, are to be carried out

¹ See *What are MTS (Machine and Tractor Stations)?*, by L. Valersctin and A. Leon-tiev (Moscow, 1932, 24 pp.). "During the last three years there have been created 2600 machine [and] tractor stations, which include 1306 stations serving grain farms, 329 stations for sugar-beet farms and 217 stations for cotton farms. The value of their equipment now exceeds 600 million roubles. It includes 80,000 tractors, which are operated by about 200,000 drivers; 2000 combines; thousands of other improved implements, including reapers and so on. In connection with the machine [and] tractor stations, some 685 repair-shops have been established to maintain the agricultural tractors in good repair" (Moscow Narodny Bank's *Monthly Review*, vol. vi. No. 4, April 1933).

The above statistics were left far behind by the great campaign of 1933. Stalin announced to the Seventeenth Congress of the Communist Party on January 26, 1934, that there were then in the field "204,100 tractors; with a capacity of 3,100,000 horse-power; 25,000 combines; 30,101 motors and traction engines; 58,000 threshing machines; 1505 installations for electric threshing; 24,400 motor lorries and 4600 cars". (This represents something like a fourfold increase of machines of all kinds within three years.) "At the same time," continued Stalin, "the government had trained and sent into agriculture 111,000 technicians and agronomists, over 1,900,000 tractorists, combine operators, drivers, etc., and more than 1,600,000 men and women for managerial and administrative posts."

with the assistance of these stations.”¹

During 1933, the relations of the Machine and Tractor Stations with the collective farms within their several districts were reorganised in the light of the experience of the previous years. Whilst the thousands of tractor drivers and mechanics that descended on the villages necessarily exercised a considerable missionary effect, their relations with the collective farms were to be strictly on the basis of a business contract mutually agreed to. In addition to advice and help in preparing plans, so many tractors or other machines, kept constantly in good working order, bringing their own petrol, would execute so much work in ploughing, sowing, reaping and threshing, including fallow-land and winter sowing, in return for fixed and specified percentages of the yield mutually agreed to, the percentages for each group of collective farms being fixed with some regard to its prospective harvest. The percentage for threshing was henceforth to be calculated not on the amount of wheat brought to be threshed, but on the actual amount of the yield in grain. And when the work for each collective farm is completed, the management board of the farm, in conjunction with the MTS, is to draw up jointly a special protocol showing exactly the work done and its results in quality as well as quantity, and the amount due. Similar arrangements to those of the 1192 MTS serving grain farms would be made by the 348 in sugar-beet regions, 246 in flax, 238 in cotton, 151 in vegetables and 85 in potatoes.²

The Soviet Hierarchy is reinforced by the Communist Party

It was, however, not enough to reorganise, from top to bottom, the soviet departments responsible for agriculture, and not enough even to place in their hands the lever of 3000 or 4000 Machine and Tractor Stations, with an aggregate park of artillery of 200,000 tractors and combines, served by thousands of competent drivers and mechanics, provided with unlimited petrol. In the USSR, perhaps even more than in western countries, there is always an immense “lag”, alike in time and in space, between the creation or reorganisation of a government department, and the actual accomplishment—everywhere and completely—of the task that it is set to do. In so vital a matter as the food supply, Kaganovich, with Stalin’s full support, was taking no risks. He turned to the zealous and trustworthy members of the Communist Party to see that, not only the immense soviet organisation, from the USSR People’s Commissariat, down to the most remote village soviet and the furthest flung Machine and Tractor Station, but also the 225,000 collective farms with their several boards of management and their fifteen million families, all of them actually did their duty. It was decided by the Central Committee of the Communist Party to create some 3000 new local organs, termed “politotdeli”, being special sections or committees of selected Party members,

¹ “Agriculture”, by Professor Dr. Otto Auhagen, in *Soviet Economics*, edited by Dr. Gerhard Dohbert, 1933, p. 130.

² *Moscow Daily News*, weekly edition, February 5, 1933.

charged with seeing to it, in the several regions assigned to them, that the government policy was actually put in operation by the persons immediately responsible for each part of it. These "Policy Sections" as we shall call them—the usual translation of "Political Sections" being, we are told, not precisely accurate, and certainly misleading—represent a unique projection from Moscow of the highly centralised Communist Party.

The Work of the Policy Sections

This throwing into the field, all over the USSR, of a "hand-picked" and trustworthy second army of some 25,000 members of the Communist Party, chosen, we are told, out of a much larger number of eager applicants for the adventure, and seconded out of all sorts of departments and factories for this special service, and especially their organisation in some 3000 Policy Sections, was acclaimed as a master-stroke of policy, which, as we read the evidence, contributed more than anything else to the marked success of the agricultural campaigns of 1933 and 1934. The members of these Policy Sections were carefully instructed in their duties by Kaganovich himself, and despatched in batches from Moscow to some 3000 chosen centres in all parts of the USSR. Each Policy Section consisted of at least five persons and often more, including a director, an organiser of Party work, another of work by the Comsomols, with a woman to organise the women workers; together with an editor, not only of posters and leaflets, but also of the little local newspaper that was everywhere started.¹ The duty of each section, with the assistance of all the Party members and Comsomols in the area, was primarily and specifically to see to it that everyone—whether on the staff of the Machine and Tractor Stations, or in the service of the oblast or rayon, or of a village soviet, or in that of a collective farm—did his or her duty. Many of the Party members thus sent to "the agricultural front" also undertook one or other office, either in the Machine and Tractor Station, or in the village soviet or in the management of a collective farm. This attitude of inspection and control, coupled with the actual filling of particular posts, naturally brought the members of the Policy Sections into delicate and somewhat ambiguous relations with the local soviet officials on the one hand, and, on the other, with the Party fractions and provincial Party agents, with the result of not a little friction and some open quarrels, which had to be straightened out. We get a vision of the difficulties and dangers encountered by these missionaries in the correspondence of one of those who went out in the first batch in 1930. Gregor Injevatkine, who, after bringing to a high degree of organisation the district of Turkestan to which he was sent, was eventually assassinated by a group of recalcitrant peasants. His letters to his wife, to his comrades in the Moscow factory in which he had been

¹ We have been told that the tens of thousands of members of the politotdeli were all carefully selected by the official staff of the special commission of the Communist Party; and even that they were all personally interviewed by Kaganovich himself—perhaps this applied only to the director of each politotdel—who rejected those of whose capacity and fidelity he was not satisfied.

employed, and to the Party authorities afford a moving picture of the life of these devoted Party missionaries.¹ The establishment of the Policy Sections, and the selection in 1933 of a second army of Party members to man them, arose, we are told, directly out of the disclosure to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the continued recalcitrance and sabotage in the North Caucasus. Their instructions were briefly summed up on the phrase that what they had to do was to "make the kolkhosi bolshevist and the members thereof more prosperous".²

We are able to give a useful account of the actual methods and results of a politotdel at work as a whole in a recent description by an American student who was spending a year among the kolkhosi. "As each collective farm completes [its harvesting], the Policy Section issues directives regarding grain deliveries to the government [and] the past, present and future activities of the farm. These sum up the accomplishments and failures . . . discuss its special problems and give instructions for the future . . . stating whether the directives need to be discussed with the kolkhos board of the district executive committee before being carried out. The directives begin with a statistical report on the fulfilment of grain deliveries, and a statement of the success of the collective in relation to its own history and the achievement of other collective farms in the district. The kolkhos is reminded of its contract with the Machine and Tractor Station, that it must pay the MTS in kind a percentage of the crop for the use of the machines. The directives then take up the collective needs of the kolkhos, the needs of special groups within it, and, finally, special directives are given in regard to families and individuals. A fund must be laid aside for seed and insurance, arrangements made for invalids and orphans and a kolkhos social fund created. . . . Care is exercised to secure justice for groups of individuals. The collective farm which has accomplished specially fine work sometimes receives a tractor or a truck as an award from the MTS. On one farm where repairs were urgently necessary, and there were not sufficient funds to care for the whole kolkhos, the policy section has directed that the cottages housing the largest families should be repaired first. Faithful and efficient farm members, or a brigade which surmounted great difficulties, are credited with a 10 or 20 per cent increase on their work days. Very careless workers receive a like deduction. Where a collective farm worker has retrieved a bad reputation, his deduction may be cancelled or cut in half. Those kolkhos udarniks who are without a cow are singled out to receive a calf from the kolkhos dairy. In one instance a family had received no payment last year because of the kulak sabotage which disrupted the farm; this year the political section has ordered a 15 per cent increase in its work days [addition to its units of sharing] in partial restitution. . . . The directives deal with innumer-

¹ *One of the 25,000: the Story of a Shock Worker*, by A. Isbach (Moscow, 1931); *Un des 25,000: la brigade de choc de la collectivisation: documents rassemblés par A. C. Izbasch* (Paris, 1931, 72 pp.).

² *The Politotdel* (in Russian), by M. Karavai (Moscow, Partizdat, 1934, 150 pp.).

able other details, with every phase of kolkhos life ; ploughing, bee-keeping, poultry-keeping, etc." ¹

Was there a Famine in the USSR in 1931-1932 ?

From one end of the USSR to the other we must visualise the Agricultural Departments of the oblasts and rayons, with the village soviets and the Machine and Tractor Stations, continuing to supervise and assist the couple of hundred thousand collective farms, the whole organisation being guided and directed by the 3000 Policy Sections, inspired and driven by the incessant activity of Kaganovich at the head of the Agricultural Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. What has been the result of this attempt to cope with climatic difficulties on the one hand, and on the other with the inertia, the ignorance and the suspicion of the peasantry of the immense area that had to be dealt with ? Was there or was there not a famine in the USSR in the years 1931 and 1932 ?

Those who think this a simple question to answer will probably already have made up their minds, in accordance with nearly all the statements by persons hostile to Soviet Communism, that there was, of course, a famine in the USSR ; and they do not hesitate to state the mortality that it caused, in precise figures—unknown to any statistician—varying from three to six and even to ten million deaths.² On the other hand, a retired high official of the Government of India, speaking Russian, and well acquainted with Tsarist Russia, who had himself administered famine districts in India, and who visited in 1932 some of the localities in the USSR in which conditions were reported to be among the worst, informed the present writers at the time that he had found no evidence of there

¹ Article by F. E. Hurst, on the Ustiabinsk Machine and Tractor Station, North Caucasus, in *Moscow Daily News*, October 15, 1933.

² Scepticism as to statistics of total deaths from starvation, in a territory extending to one-sixth of the earth's land surface, would anyhow be justified. But as to the USSR there seems no limit to the wildness of exaggeration. We quote the following interesting case related by Mr. Sherwood Eddy, an experienced American traveller in Russia : " Our party, consisting of about 20 persons, while passing through the villages, heard rumours of the village of Gavrilovka, where all the men but one were said to have died of starvation. We went at once to investigate and track down this rumour. We divided into four parties, with four interpreters of our own choosing, and visited simultaneously the registry office of births and deaths, the village priest, the local soviet, the judge, the schoolmaster and every individual peasant we met. We found that out of 1100 families three individuals had died of typhus. They had immediately closed the school and the church, inoculated the entire population and stamped out the epidemic without developing another case. We could not discover a single death from hunger or starvation, though many had felt the bitter pinch of want. It was another instance of the ease with which wild rumours spread concerning Russia " (*Russia To-day : What can we learn from it ?* by Sherwood Eddy, 1934, p. xiv).

We had this investigation described to us in detail by one of the interpreters who took part in it, and who had the not inconsiderable task of arranging the transport for a journey of a hundred kilometres away from the railway over almost impossible highways. It became well known among Russian journalists at the time (see, for instance, *Reise durch hundert Kollektivwirtschaften*, by L. P. Boross, Moscow, 1932, pp. 161-163), but no British or American correspondent seems to have mentioned it.

being or having been anything like what Indian officials would describe as a famine.

Without expecting to convince the prejudiced, we give, for what it may be deemed worth, the conclusion to which our visits in 1932 and 1934, and subsequent examination of the available evidence, now lead us. That in each of the years 1931 and 1932 there was a partial failure of crops in various parts of the huge area of the USSR is undoubtedly true. It is true also of British India and of the United States. It has been true also of the USSR, and of every other country at all comparable in size, in each successive year of the present century. In countries of such vast extent, having every kind of climate, there is always a partial failure of crops somewhere. How extensive and how serious was this partial failure of crops in the USSR of 1931 and 1932 it is impossible to ascertain with any assurance. On the one hand, it has been asserted, by people who have seldom had any opportunity of going to the suffering districts, that throughout huge provinces there ensued a total absence of foodstuffs, so that (as in 1891 and 1921) literally several millions of people died of starvation. On the other hand, soviet officials on the spot, in one district after another, informed the present writers that, whilst there was shortage and hunger, there was, at no time, a total lack of bread, though its quality was impaired by using other ingredients than wheaten flour; and that any increase in the death-rate, due to diseases accompanying defective nutrition, occurred only in a relatively small number of villages. What may carry more weight than this official testimony was that of various resident British and American journalists, who travelled during 1933 and 1934 through the districts reputed to have been the worst sufferers, and who declared to the present writers that they had found no reason to suppose that the trouble had been more serious than was officially represented. Our own impression, after considering all the available evidence, is that the partial failure of crops certainly extended to only a fraction of the USSR; possibly to no more than one-tenth of the geographical area. We think it plain that this partial failure was not in itself sufficiently serious to cause actual starvation, except possibly, in the worst districts, relatively small in extent. Any estimate of the total number of deaths in excess of the normal average, based on a total population supposed to have been subjected to famine conditions, of sixty millions, which would mean half the entire rural population between the Baltic and the Pacific (as some have rashly asserted), or even one-tenth of such a population, appears to us to be fantastically excessive.

On the other hand, it seems to be proved that a considerable number of peasant households, both in the spring of 1932 and in that of 1933, found themselves unprovided with a sufficient store of cereal food, and specially short of fats. To these cases we shall recur. But we are at once reminded that in countries like India and the USSR, in China, and even in the United States, in which there is no ubiquitous system of poor relief, a certain number of people—among these huge populations even

many thousands—die each year of starvation, or of the diseases endemic under these conditions; and that whenever there is even a partial failure of crops this number will certainly be considerably increased. It cannot be supposed to have been otherwise in parts of the southern Ukraine, the Kuban district and Daghestan in the winters of 1931 and 1932.

But before we are warranted in describing this scarcity of food in particular households of particular districts as a "famine", we must enquire how the scarcity came to exist. We notice among the evidence the fact that the scarcity was "patchy". In one and the same locality, under weather conditions apparently similar if not identical, there are collective farms which have in these years reaped harvests of more than average excellence, whilst others, adjoining them on the north or on the south, have experienced conditions of distress, and may sometimes have known actual starvation. This is not to deny that there were whole districts in which drought or cold seriously reduced the yield. But there are clearly other cases, how many we cannot pretend to estimate, in which the harvest failures were caused, not by something in the sky, but by something in the collective farm itself. And we are soon put on the track of discovery. As we have already mentioned, we find a leading personage in the direction of the Ukrainian revolt actually claiming that "the opposition of the Ukrainian population caused the failure of the grain-storing plan of 1931, and still more so, that of 1932". He boasts of the success of the "passive resistance which aimed at a systematic frustration of the Bolshevik plans for the sowing and gathering of the harvest". He tells us plainly that, owing to the efforts of himself and his friends, "whole tracts were left unsown", and "in addition, when the crop was being gathered last year [1932], it happened that, in many areas, especially in the south, 20, 40 and even 50 per cent was left in the fields, and was either not collected at all or was ruined in the threshing".¹

So far as the Ukraine is concerned, it is clearly not Heaven which is principally to blame for the failure of crops, but the misguided members of many of the collective farms.² What sort of "famine" is it that is

¹ "Ukrainia under Bolshevik Rule", by Isaac Mazepa, in *Slavonic Review*, January 1934, pp. 342-343. One of the Ukrainian nationalists who was brought to trial is stated to have confessed to having received explicit instructions from the leaders of the movement abroad to the effect that "it is essential that, in spite of the good harvest (of 1930), the position of the peasantry should become worse. For this purpose it is necessary to persuade the members of the kolkhosi to harvest the grain before it has become ripe; to agitate among the kolkhos members and to persuade them that, however hard they may work, their grain will be taken away from them by the State on one pretext or another; and to sabotage the proper calculation of the labour days put into harvesting by the members of the kolkhosi so that they may receive less than they are entitled to by their work" (Speech by M. Postyshev, secretary of the Ukraine Communist Party, to plenum of Central Committee, 1933).

² It can be definitely denied that the serious shortage of harvested grain in parts of southern Ukraine was due to climatic conditions. "In a number of southern regions, from 30 to 40 per cent of the crop remained on the fields. This was not a result of the drought which was so severe in certain parts of Siberia, the Urals and the Middle and Lower Volga regions that it reduced there the expected crops by about 50 per cent. No act of God was involved in the Ukraine. The difficulties experienced in the sowing, harvesting and grain

due neither to the drought nor the rain, heat nor cold, rust nor fly, weeds nor locusts ; but to a refusal of the agriculturists to sow (" whole tracts were left unsown ") ; and to gather up the wheat when it was cut (" even 50 per cent was left in the fields ") ?

The other district in which famine conditions are most persistently reported is that of Kuban, and the surrounding areas, chiefly inhabited by the Don Cossacks, who, as it is not irrelevant to remember, were the first to take up arms against the Bolshevik Government in 1918, and so begin the calamitous civil war. These Don Cossacks, as we have mentioned, had enjoyed special privileges under the tsars, the loss of which under the new régime has, even to-day, not been forgiven. Here there is evidence that whole groups of peasants, under hostile influences, got into such a state of apathy and despair, on being pressed into a new system of cooperative life which they could not understand and about which they heard all sorts of evil, that they ceased to care whether their fields were tilled or not, or what would happen to them in the winter if they produced no crop at all. Whatever the reason, there were, it seems, in the Kuban, as in the Ukraine, whole villages that sullenly abstained from sowing or harvesting, usually not completely, but on all but a minute fraction of their fields, so that, when the year ended, they had no stock of seed, and in many cases actually no grain on which to live. There are many other instances in which individual peasants made a practice, out of spite, of surreptitiously "barbering" the ripening wheat ; that is, rubbing out the grain from the ear, or even cutting off the whole ear, and carrying off for individual hoarding this shameless theft of community property.¹

Unfortunately it was not only in such notoriously disaffected areas as the Ukraine and Kuban that these peculiar "failures of crops" occurred. For instance, the Machine and Tractor Sections that were sent to far-off Turkestan found, as we learn from the intimate private letters of the

collection campaign of 1931 were man-made" ("Collectivisation of Agriculture in the Soviet Union", by W. Ladejinsky, *Political Science Quarterly* (New York, June 1934, p. 222). "It is evident", writes another of the leaders of the Ukrainian émigrés at Prague, himself the Foreign Minister of the short-lived Ukrainian Republic of 1919, "that this famine was not the result of natural causes. . . . The peasants are absolutely hostile to a system which runs counter to all their habits for centuries past. . . . The Ukrainian peasant has always been an individualist . . . and sees no reason why he should work for the profit of others" ("Ukraine and its Political Aspirations", by Alexander Shulgin, in *Slavonic Review*, January 1935).

Mr. Chamberlin himself now ascribes at any rate some part of the relative failure of the harvests of 1931 and 1932, not to any climatic conditions, but "largely as a result of the apathy and discouragement of the peasants", which made the yield "much lower than it would have been in normal years" ("Russia Through Coloured Glasses", in *Fortnightly Review*, October 1934).

¹ The practice led to the employment of children (members of the "Pioneers" organisation) to guard the growing crops against thieves. Presently it was found necessary in some places to erect wooden watch-towers and to post sentinels night and day, in order to prevent the whole crop from being looted. (In China, one member from each family habitually watches the household plot as soon as the plants appear above ground, to prevent their being stolen.)

martyred Party member that we have already cited,¹ just the same recalcitrance among the ignorant and suspicious peasants, whether nominally enrolled in collective farms or persistently obstructing their formation.² These were the dupes and victims of the ceaseless machinations of the kulaks and others, whose position was threatened with destruction. How serious the situation appeared to Kaganovich we may gather from the lurid denunciation that he made in January 1933.³ To any generally successful cultivation, he declared, "the anti-soviet elements of the village are offering fierce opposition. Economically ruined, but not yet having lost their influence entirely, the kulaks, former white officers, former priests, their sons, former ruling landlords and sugar-mill owners, former Cossacks and other anti-soviet elements of the bourgeois-nationalist and also of the social-revolutionary and Petlura-supporting intelligentsia settled in the villages, are trying in every way to corrupt the collective farms, are trying to foil the measures of the Party and the Government in the realm of farming, and for these ends are making use of the backwardness of part of the collective farm members against the interests of the socialised collective farm, against the interests of the collective farm peasantry.

"Penetrating into collective farms as accountants, managers, warehouse keepers, brigadiers and so on, and frequently as leading workers on the boards of collective farms, the anti-soviet elements strive to organise sabotage, spoil machines, sow without the proper measures, steal collective farm goods, undermine labour discipline, organise the thieving of seed and secret granaries, sabotage grain collections—and sometimes they succeed in disorganising kolkhosi."

However much we may discount such highly coloured denunciations, we cannot avoid noticing how exactly the statements as to sabotage of the harvest, made on the one hand by the Soviet Government, and on the other by the nationalist leaders of the Ukrainian recalcitrants,

¹ *One of the 25,000 : the Story of a Shock Worker*, by A. Isbach (Moscow, 1931).

² Much the same recalcitrance had been manifested in 1927–1928 when the wide opening of the "scissors" caused the relatively well-to-do peasants to withhold their grain from the market. "A genuine and severe economic tug-of-war between the Soviet Government and the more prosperous peasants occurred during the winter of 1927 and the spring of 1928, and seems likely to go on indefinitely, perhaps in milder forms. As early as the fall of 1927 it became evident that the peasants were holding back their grain to a degree which not only destroyed any possibility of exporting it but even *seriously menaced the bread supply of the cities*. How did this 'grain strike' come about? It is very hard to answer this question. There is certainly no widespread secret organisation among the peasants which could coordinate their activity or instruct them all to do the same thing at the same time. And yet they sometimes display an uncanny faculty for apparently unconscious spontaneous action, as when they deserted from all parts of the front and swarmed on the landlords' estates in 1917. Something of this faculty must have come into play in the autumn of 1927, when in Siberia and Ukraine, in Central Russia and the North Caucasus, the same phenomenon of peasant unwillingness to part with grain made itself felt" (*Soviet Russia*, by W. H. Chamberlin, 1930, p. 195).

³ Report of Kaganovich on Resolution of the Joint Plenum of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission of the Communist Party, in *Moscow Daily News* (weekly edition), January 20, 1933.

corroborate each other. To quote again the Ukrainian leader, it was "the opposition of the Ukrainian population" that "caused the failure of the grain-storing plan of 1931, and still more so, that of 1932". What on one side is made a matter for boasting is, on the other side, a ground for denunciation. Our own inference is merely that, whilst both sides probably exaggerate, the sabotage referred to actually took place, to a greater or less extent, in various parts of the USSR, in which collective farms had been established under pressure. The partial failure of the crops due to climatic conditions, which is to be annually expected in one locality or another, was thus aggravated, to a degree that we find no means of estimating, and rendered far more extensive in its area, not only by "barbering" the growing wheat, and stealing from the common stock, but also by deliberate failure to sow, failure to weed, failure to thresh, and failure to warehouse even all the grain that was threshed.¹ But this is not what is usually called a famine.

What the Soviet Government was faced with, from 1929 onward, was, in fact, not a famine but a widespread general strike of the peasantry, in resistance to the policy of collectivisation, fomented and encouraged by the disloyal elements of the population, not without incitement from the exiles at Paris and Prague. Beginning with the calamitous slaughter of live-stock in many areas in 1929-1930, the recalcitrant peasants defeated, during the years 1931 and 1932, all the efforts of the Soviet Government to get the land adequately cultivated. It was in this way,² much more than by the partial failure of the crops due to drought or cold, that was produced in an uncounted host of villages in many parts of the USSR a state of things in the winter of 1931-1932, and again in that of 1932-1933, in which many of the peasants found themselves with inadequate supplies of food. But this did not always lead to starvation. In innumerable cases, in which there was no actual lack of roubles, notably in the Ukraine, the men journeyed off to the nearest big market, and (as there was no deficiency in the country as a whole) returned after many days with the requisite sacks of flour. In other cases, especially among the independent peasantry, the destitute family itself moved away to the cities, in search of work at wages, leaving its rude dwelling empty and desolate, to be quoted by some incautious observer as proof of death by starvation. In an unknown number of other cases—as it seems, to be counted by the

¹ "The peasant resisted by frauds, exaggerating their demand for seeds and cattle food, under-estimating their crops. They fought very hard against compulsion. Moreover, when they saw that they had to give over a great part of their output, they diminished the output, with the result that there was an immense slaughtering of the cattle, and a very serious diminution of the crops. The régime had the great good luck of the great harvest in 1933. Before that there was hunger in large sections of the country" ("An Economist's Analysis of Soviet Russia", by Arthur Felling, in *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, July 1934, pp. 153-157).

² "In general, the harvesting and threshing processes were carried out by the collectivised peasantry of the Ukraine in such a manner that from 34 to 36 million quintals of grain were wasted in the fields. This amount alone could have covered two-thirds of the grain the Ukraine was to have delivered to the State" ("Collectivisation of Agriculture", by W. Ladejinsky, *Political Science Quarterly*, p. 233).

hundred thousand—the families were forcibly taken from the holding which they had failed to cultivate, and removed to distant places where they could be provided with work by which they could earn their subsistence.

The Soviet Government has been severely blamed for these deportations, which inevitably caused great hardships. The irresponsible criticism loses, however, much of its force by the inaccuracy with which the case is stated. It is, for instance, almost invariably taken for granted that the Soviet Government heartlessly refused to afford any relief to the starving districts. Very little investigation shows that relief was repeatedly afforded where there was reason to suppose that the shortage was not due to sabotage or deliberate failure to cultivate. There were, to begin with, extensive remissions of payments in kind due to the government.¹ But there was also a whole series of transfers of grain from the government stocks to villages found to be destitute, sometimes actually for consumption, and in other cases to replace the seed funds which had been used for food.²

Of the enforced removals there have been two kinds. In 1929 and 1930 drastic measures were taken against those elements in the villages which were seriously interfering with the formation of kolkhosi, often by personal violence, and wilful damage to buildings and crops. These disturbers of the peace were in many cases forcibly removed from their homes. "The usual assumption outside the Soviet Union", writes one who witnessed the proceedings of 1930, "is that this exiling occurred through drastic action by a mystically omnipotent GPU. The actual process was quite different: it was done by village meetings of poor peasants and farm hands who listed those kulaks who 'impede our collective farm by force and violence', and asked the Government to deport them. In the hot days of 1930 I attended many of these meetings. There were harsh, bitter discussions, analysing one by one the 'best families', who had grabbed the best lands, exploited labour by owning the tools of production, as 'best families' normally and historically do, and who were now fighting the rise of the collective farms by arson, cattle-killing and murder. . . . The meetings I personally attended were more seriously judicial, more balanced in their discussion, than any court trial I have attended in America: these peasants knew they were dealing with serious

¹ "The basic decree, promulgated on May 6, 1932, states that the grain collections from the collectives and the individual farms must be decreased by 43.2 million quintals in comparison with the 1931 programme" ("Collectivisation of Agriculture in the Soviet Union", by W. Ladejinsky, in *Political Science Quarterly* (New York), June 1934, p. 231).

² Thus: "On February 17, 1932, almost six months before the harvesting of the new crop the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR and the Central Committee of the Communist Party, directed that the collective farms in the eastern part of the country, which had suffered from the drought, be loaned over six million quintals of grain for the establishment of both seed and food funds" (*ibid.* p. 229).

Later, we read: "Certain areas, such as the Ukraine and North Caucasus which . . . had to consume all the available grain, remained with little or no seed funds. In this case the Soviet Government loaned to the collectives of the Ukraine almost 3.1 million quintals of seed, and to those of North Caucasus, over 2 million quintals" (*ibid.* p. 243).

punishments, and did not handle them lightly. . . . Those who envisage that the rural revolution which ended in farm collectivisation was a 'war between Stalin and the peasants' simply weren't on the ground when the whirlwind broke. The anarchy of an elemental upheaval was its chief characteristic: it was marked by great ecstasies and terrors; local leaders in village township and province did what was right in their own eyes and passionately defended their convictions. Moscow studied and participated in the local earthquakes; and, out of the mass experience, made, somewhat too late to save the live stock, general laws for its direction. It was a harsh, bitter and by no means bloodless conflict. . . . Township and provincial commissions in the USSR reviewed and cut down the lists of kulaks for exile, to guard against local excesses."¹

Later, when the sabotage took the form of a widespread "general strike" against even cultivation of the collective farms, the Soviet Government found itself on the horns of the same dilemma that perplexed the administrators of the English Poor Law. To provide maintenance for able-bodied men whose refusal to work had brought them to destitution would merely encourage them, and their families, and eventually countless others, to repeat the offence. Yet deliberately to leave them to starve was an unacceptable alternative. The English Guardians of the Poor, early in the eighteenth century, invented the device, which was readopted in 1834, of relieving the able-bodied and their families only on condition that they entered the workhouse, and there performed whatever tasks of work could be set to them. The Soviet Government had no workhouses available and no time to build them. Its device was forcibly to remove the peasants who were found to be without food from the villages which they were demoralising to places at a distance where they could be put to work at the making of railways, roads or canals, at the cutting of timber, or at prospecting or mining for mineral ores—all tasks of discomfort and occasionally of hardship, by which they were enabled to earn the bare subsistence wage of relief work. It was a rough and ready expedient of "famine relief", which undoubtedly caused much suffering to innocent victims. But candid students of the circumstances may not unwarrantably come to the conclusion that, when the crisis of possible starvation arrived, as the result largely of deliberate sabotage, the Soviet Government could hardly have acted otherwise than it did.²

¹ "The Soviet Dictatorship", by Anna Louise Strong, in *American Mercury*, October 1934; *Dictatorship and Democracy*, by the same, 1934.

How one village came to its decision in 1930 to suppress the small minority which had persistently sought, by every kind of criminal act, to ruin the local kolkhos, is described in the artless recital of a peasant woman, *Collective Farm Trud*, told by Eudoxia Pazukhina (Moscow, 1932, pp. 60-61).

² The enforced expropriation of these peasants has seemed to foreign critics an extreme injustice. Were not the peasants, in limiting their production, merely doing what they liked with their own? In fact, the peasants in the USSR are not owners of the land they till, but merely occupants of nationalised land, for the purpose of cultivating it. But whether or not they are in the same position as the peasant proprietors of France or Flanders, there seems nothing unreasonable or inequitable in the view that, wherever the land is entrusted to a peasant class by the community, it is on the paramount condition

With the characteristic Bolshevik habit of "self-criticism", the Soviet Government blamed its own organisation for having let things come to such a pass. "The village Party and Young Communist organisation," declared Kaganovich in January 1933, "including the groups in state farms and machine-tractor stations, frequently lack revolutionary feeling and vigilance. In many places they not only do not oppose this anti-soviet work of hostile elements with class alertness and an everyday Bolshevik drive to strengthen soviet influence over the broad non-Party masses of the collective farmers and state farm-workers, but they themselves sometimes fall under the influence of these sabotaging elements; and some members of the Party, who entered for careerist purposes, line up with the enemies of the collective and state farms and the Soviet Government, and join with them in organising thieving of seed at sowing time, grain at harvesting and threshing time, hiding grain in secret granaries, sabotaging state grain purchases, and really draw certain collective farms, groups of kolkhozniks and backward workers of state farms into the struggle against the soviet power. It is particularly true of state farms, where frequently the directors, under the influence of anti-soviet elements, undergo a bourgeois degeneration, sabotage the tasks set by the Soviet Government, enter upon out and out treachery to the Party and Government, and attempt to dispose of state farm products as if they were their own personal property."

But with no less characteristic Bolshevik persistence, the occasion was taken to intensify the campaign, so as to ensure that 1933 and 1934 should see better results than 1931 or 1932. It was recognised, and frankly confessed, that a serious error had been made, often owing to the mistaken zeal of local agents, in making successive levies on the successful kolkhosi, when these were found in possession of unexpectedly large crops. Many peasants had lost confidence in the government's financial measures, always fearing that the results of their labours would be taken away from them. Hence the whole system was changed. The government relinquished all right to take produce by contract any more than by requisition. Henceforth nothing more was to be exacted from the collective farms by way of agricultural tax (apart from the agreed payment for the use of the tractors) than the one official levy of grain, meat, milk and other produce, definitely fixed in advance, in exact proportion so far as arable produce was concerned, to the normal harvest on the number of hectares that had to be sown and weeded and reaped. Similar assessments were made for other produce. However great might prove to be the yield, the government would claim no more. Even if a larger area were sown than had been required, the government pledged itself not to increase its demand upon the zealous kolkhos. As soon as this definitely fixed levy had been paid for the whole district, each kolkhos

that they should produce, up to their ability, the foodstuffs required for the maintenance of the community. Any organised refusal to cultivate must inevitably be met by expropriation.

was to be free to sell the surplus to outsiders as it pleased ; even to selling it, in the open market, to the highest bidder.¹ At the same time the whole organisation was drastically overhauled. Many hundreds of local officials were, during 1932, found guilty of gross neglect, or wanton mis-handling of machinery, stores and crops. These were severely reprimanded and in many cases dismissed from office. Hundreds of the worst offenders were sentenced to imprisonment, and at least several dozens to be shot. The members of the kolkhosi themselves, including the managers and accountants, were also faithfully dealt with. What was most difficult to cope with was the deplorable general sullenness, in which many, and sometimes most, of the peasants had ceased to care whether or not the normal harvest was reaped. Where the ploughing had been only feebly performed ; the weeding left undone ; and the scanty growing grain filched from the fields by night, the whole kolkhos was drastically shaken up ; the most guilty of the saboteurs, often ex-kulaks, were expelled ; the negligent managers and peccant accountants were dismissed from office ; collective farms which had wilfully neglected or refused to till their land were sternly refused relief when they found themselves without food, so as not to encourage further recusancy ; and in some of the worst cases the inhabitants of whole villages, if only in order to save them from starvation, were summarily removed from the land that they had neglected or refused to cultivate, and deported elsewhere, to find labouring work of any sort for bare maintenance. It is not denied that in these summary removals, as in those of individual kulaks who had refused to conform to the government's requirements, great hardship was inflicted on a large number of women and children, as well as on the men. Without such cost in suffering, it is argued, the rapid reorganisation of peasant agriculture, which seemed the only practicable means of solving the problem of the national food supply, could not have been effected.

In the result there seems to us no doubt that this peculiar stiffening of the local rural administration by a chosen army of zealous and specially instructed Party members, in direct communication with Kaganovich and the special department for agriculture of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, was, during 1933 and 1934, remarkably effective. Kaganovich himself was during both these years constantly touring the country, looking minutely into everything, and giving orders which had to be obeyed.² The Soviet Government was lucky in a critical year (1933)

¹ This single tax, as we may call it, was assessed in grain at three rates : the normal on those kolkhosi which had the use of the government tractors, for which a separate fee had to be paid ; a higher rate where no tractor fee had to be paid because none was used or desired ; and a still higher rate on the individual peasant or the kulak, whose very existence it was wished to discourage.

² "An amusing turn was given to the congress when the speech of Tobashev, of Moscow Province, was interrupted by Kaganovich, Secretary of the Moscow Committee of the Party. 'When Kaganovich came to our farm,' declared Tobashev, 'our chairman said, "This is the way to the office." Kaganovich replied, "It would be much better to see the barns and get an idea how you carry on work here." He saw everything and everywhere pointed out shortcomings ; our equipment, for instance, was kept in a shed,

in a harvest which, even if its excellence was exaggerated, was at least vastly better than those of the preceding years. But there would not have been anything like so great a yield if this extraordinary administrative activity had not seen to it, in practically all the 240,000 farms, that the sowing was actually undertaken and completed at the right time; that the harrowing was not scamped; that there was everywhere much more systematic weeding than had ever before been undertaken; that the tractors and harvesters were supplied to nearly every collective farm, and maintained in unwonted efficiency; that the harvest was got in without procrastination; and that the grain was guarded from theft and stored in safety. In the following year (1934) the harvest was apparently, on the average, not quite so great as in 1933; but the universal testimony was to the effect that the behaviour of the peasants had greatly improved. Some of the villages that had been among the most recalcitrant in cultivation during 1932, and had hungered most in the winter of 1932-1933, were among the most diligent in 1934, and abundantly reaped the reward of their increased labours. As a consequence it was reported that the government obtained in the aggregate almost as large an amount of grain, in return for its machinery and seed, as its share of the less abundant harvest of 1934, as it had received out of the bumper crops of 1933. And now that the worst members of the collective farms have been drastically expelled, whilst the others have been actually shown how the work should be done, and have been made to realise that, even after paying all that the government requires from them, *they have much more to their individual shares than they have ever in their lives made out of their tiny holdings*, they may perhaps be expected to be able to dispense with much of the hustling by which Kaganovich and his myrmidons in 1933 and 1934 pulled the USSR through a dangerous crisis.¹

Life on a Collective Farm

Let us now turn from the exciting campaign by which Kaganovich, as we think, saved the situation; and relieved the Soviet Government from its grave anxiety as to the feeding of the city populations and the Red Army. What is the life that is normally led by the seventy millions of people in the USSR who make up the collective farms?

"Superficially", remarked the late Michael Farbman, "a collectivised

the door of which did not close properly.' 'I remember,' interjected Kaganovich, 'that snow came in through the roof.' (Laughter.) 'Quite right,' returned Tobashev, 'but now we have repaired it.' 'Very good,' returned Kaganovich, 'I'll return soon to find out.' 'We knew perfectly well,' concluded Tobashev, 'that you would not take our word for it. We are waiting for you to come back.' " (*Moscow Daily News*, February 18, 1933).

¹ We may quote the testimony of an impartial Canadian expert: "Because of the increased area of holdings and higher yields in the collectives, as a result of the greater use of tractors and modern implements and production methods, the income per household on the average collectivised farm has increased at least 150 per cent as a nation-wide average, and by more than 200 per cent in numerous localities" (*Russia, Market or Menace*, by Thomas D. Campbell, 1932, p. 65). This author, who was in two separate years sent for by the Soviet Government to advise them how to cope with their agricultural difficulties, successfully conducts a 95,000-acre wheat farm in Montana, U.S.A.

village looks very like the traditional Russian village. But essentially it is something quite new. The life of a peasant in such a village differs almost entirely from that of the old-fashioned mujik. Instead of being confined to a petty world in which he had to till the various narrow strips that comprise his holding with the aid of a single horse, he has become a partner in a big estate and has to adapt himself to large-scale methods of cultivation and the use of all sorts of machines of which he had never even heard before. Moreover, he has suffered a social and political as well as an economic change. His share in the cooperative effort is involving him in various new experiences with his neighbours. Of these the organisation of work is naturally the most important."¹

The Members' Meeting

The basis of the administration of the collective farm, as in the soviet and trade union hierarchies, is the periodical meeting of all the members over the age of eighteen. At such a meeting, at least once in every year, and in many cases more frequently, there is elected the chairman, and several other members to form the board of management (pravlenie), which constitutes the effective executive for all purposes. It is by this body, in the atmosphere of day-by-day discussion among all the members, and subject to periodical report and debate in the members' meeting, that all the necessary decisions are taken: what crops shall be raised on what parts of the farm; when the various operations of ploughing, sowing, weeding and harvesting shall be undertaken; which members shall be assigned to each of the innumerable separate tasks, and all the thousand and one detailed arrangements that even the smallest collective enterprise necessarily involves.

The Management of a Collective Farm

The actual organisation of work within each collective farm, together with the arrangements for sharing the product among the members, vary from farm to farm. The 240,000 farms, indeed, differ indefinitely from each other in almost every respect, according to the local conditions and to the capacity and honesty of the leading members. At first, everything was of the simplest. All the members worked pretty well as they chose, at any of the varied tasks. It was often assumed that the year's product could and should be shared equally among all the little community, on the basis of the number of mouths to be fed, irrespective of age, sex, capacity or the work actually performed. Gradually this simplicity was abandoned in favour of a definite assignment of tasks and offices, by decision of the members' meeting, but on the recommendation of the responsible officers and the board of management. In all the well-organised kolkhosi the workers are allocated to brigades, to each of which is assigned a specific task. In order to fix responsibility each brigade has a particular area of land to cultivate, with its own set of implements, and

¹ "Creating a New Agricultural System", in *The Economist* (London), October 15, 1932.

is required to concentrate its work on a particular crop, whether wheat or rye, flax or beet, cotton or sunflower, throughout the whole agricultural year upon the same area, in the successive operations of ploughing, sowing, harrowing, weeding and harvesting. In the same way a specific brigade takes charge, throughout the whole year, of the horses, cattle, sheep or pigs that the kolkhos possesses in common, so that there may be no doubt as to responsibility for their maintenance in health.

Experience soon proved the necessity of changing the basis of sharing from mouths to be fed to days of work performed, often supplemented by an allowance for children under working age. The share for each day's work had then to be differentiated not by sex or age but according to the laboriousness or disagreeableness of the task.¹ The importance of the functions of management and accounting soon came to be increasingly recognised. But in order to keep down the overhead charges the number of members who may be employed otherwise than in actually productive work, such as management, secretarial duties, accounting and measuring, is strictly limited; and it is laid down that their hours of work must be reckoned, in the sharing, at no more than the average per hour of the whole body of adult workers.

When it was found at the end of the harvest that a considerable surplus remained, after all the advances to members had been covered, and all the required transfers or payments to the government had been made—and this has undoubtedly been the case in successive years in many collective farms, and during 1933 and 1934 in, at least, many tens of thousands of them—the disposal of this surplus has been the subject of prolonged discussion among the members, leading up to a decision by the members' meeting.² How much should be devoted to capital improvement and how much to distribution as a bonus in money or in produce; whether to build a new barn, a new cow-house, a new silo; or a village hall, a club-house, or a cinema; or a children's crèche, a primitive apartment house for the young and unmarried men, or a clinic for the visiting doctor—all these have been talked over, and here and there, one at a time, in whatever order desired, actually undertaken.

How Disputes are Settled

In the working life of such a community there must inevitably occur disputes which even a vote cannot settle. For these, as in the factory,

¹ "The value of work done by members of kolkhosi is reckoned in labour days. But what is a labour day? A labour day is a fixed quantity and a fixed quality of work done by a member of the kolkhos" (Tataev, *The Distribution of Income in the Kolkhosi*, Partizdat, Moscow, 1932, p. 24, in Russian).

"In the Instructions issued by Kolkhoscentre as to rates of pay for work it is stated that no matter by whom the work is done—whether by a man, by a woman or a young person—this work, if equal in quantity and quality, must be reckoned as an equal number of labour days, and must be paid for in a corresponding share of the income" (*ibid.* p. 28).

² In order to ensure that nothing is decided without general consent, it has been prescribed by law that the objects of the proposed expenditure must be within the kolkhos itself; and that no proposal shall be deemed to have been carried otherwise than by a

there is increasingly resort to "the Triangle". "We have all heard", writes a recent observer, "of the Triangle in the factories: management, Party and trade union. But on the collective farm there is no trade union. What then? Have we forgotten the village soviet? A village is occupied by collective farmers and a few artisans, the sales clerks in the cooperatives, school teachers, and so on. . . . The village soviet is the organ of government; the kolkhos board the economic and labour control of the farm. Their interests can never clash; they are complementary. The Triangle on the kolkhos . . . [is] composed of the chairman of the board, the chairman of the village soviet and the Party secretary. And this triangular form of representation is carried down through the farm structure. On each brigade there is also a member of the village soviet, elected from the brigade, who, with the brigadier and the brigade Party organiser, forms the brigade Triangle. Brigadiers are appointed by the farm board at a general meeting, when these appointments may be discussed, opposed or confirmed."¹

Democracy in Agriculture

No one can possibly visit all the 240,000 collective farms spread over an immense area; and no visitor of half a dozen or so can form any useful idea of the extent to which such a sample—no larger than one-twenty-thousandth part—is typical of the enormous mass, either in general efficiency or in amount of product. What most impresses the political student is the vision of these 240,000 separate communities scattered throughout the length and breadth of the USSR, severally working out their own life-conditions, within the framework of the law and the regulations common to them all, not as separate families but as members of a cooperative society in which all have a common interest.² What an education must be the endless discussions of the frequent members' meetings! How refreshingly novel must be the atmosphere in which the twenty or thirty million children of these collectivised peasants are now growing up!

At the same time the peasants are, with the aid of their families, also

clear majority in a meeting at which not less than two-thirds of the membership were present and voted.

¹ Article by Charles Ashleigh describing collective farms in North Caucasus, *Moscow Daily News*, September 3, 1933. The Triangle is, however, not yet universal on collective farms, though it may be that it is tending to become so.

² Competent observers testify to signs among the peasantry of a mental revolution. "Very striking tendencies can be observed in the buying activities of kolkhos peasants. None of them would think of buying a horse. He has no right to buy a horse. Here is a real farmer. But he would no more think of buying a plough than a factory working man would think of saving up to buy a turbine. The Russian peasant, in other words, can spend a decreasing amount of money on the acquisition of capital. He will use his money, instead, to eat more, clothe himself better and live more comfortably. This is another agent, Russians say, in undermining the capitalistic instincts of the mujik. I wish I could convey the momentousness of such psychological changes. They amount to a national mental revolution" ("The Evolution of Collectivisation", by Louis Fischer, in *British Russian Gazette*, September 1933).

developing that part of the production which is left in their own hands. The magnitude and range of the individual enterprises of the members of the collective farms is seldom adequately realised. The "Model Constitution" recommended on February 17, 1935, states that "each household in collective farms in tilling districts which have a well-developed livestock industry may have at its personal disposal two or three cows, apart from calves, from two to three pigs with their offspring, a total of 20 to 25 sheep and goats, and an unlimited number of poultry, rabbits and up to 20 beehives. . . . The area of the land around the dwelling-place which is personally used by the kolkhos farmstead (exclusive of the land occupied by the dwelling) may range between a quarter and half an hectare, and in certain districts one hectare." (The hectare is 2.47 acres.)

The Commune

We need say little, at this stage, of the completely collectivised settlement known as the commune. Here the little community has all its material possessions in common ownership, and unites all its activities under common management, very much as was done by the numerous societies formed during the past hundred years, in America and elsewhere, under the influence of Robert Owen, Cabet and Fourier, or among peculiar religious denominations such as the Shakers. In the USSR at least a couple of thousand communes have been established in various places during the past decade without any religious basis; and many of them have now had several years' successful experience. We may cite as an example the commune named Seattle in the Salski district of North Caucasus province, which was founded in 1922-1923 by a group of Finnish Socialists, originally centred at Seattle in the State of Washington (U.S.A.). They were attracted to the USSR, as a country free from the oppressions of capitalism, in which they could apply, on a cooperative basis, the American agricultural machinery that they brought with them. Welcomed by Lenin, they were assigned 5291 hectares of unbroken steppe, twelve miles from the railway. Here the members, whose numbers had grown by 1935 to about 400, making a total population of approaching 1000, now comprising sixteen different nationalities, have erected substantial dwellings supplied with running water, provided nurseries and schools, sunk wells, built barns, granaries and silos, and brought under continuous cultivation more than 10,000 acres, selling the wheat annually to the Government Grain Trust.¹ The commune had, in 1933, over 100 cattle

¹ An interesting article by Richard Gerbacy, a member of the commune, in the *Moscow Daily News*, October 20, 1933, described the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the foundation of the settlement. On our visit in 1932, we were not only freely supplied with information, but also presented with a lengthy pamphlet (in Russian) entitled *From the Country of the Capitalists to the USSR: the American Commune Seattle*, by P. J. Thadeus (Moscow, Gosisdats, 1930), which, in translation, has enabled us to form a vivid picture of the early trials and the present organisation of this prosperous community.

The pamphlet *A Student in Russia*, by Paul Winterton (Cooperative Union, Manchester, 1929, 64 pp.), gives an attractive account of a commune in southern Ukraine, which had then enjoyed several years of prosperity and increasing civilisation, under enlightened leadership.

and nearly 200 pigs. It maintains a large wood-working shop and extensive brick-kilns, by which it is constantly adding to its buildings. An efficiently fitted machine shop not only keeps all the machinery of the neighbouring farms in repair, but also manufactures new parts and gears. The members of the commune enter freely into the local life of the district, take part in the elections to the village soviet (selosoviet), and send delegates to all the conferences and congresses that they are entitled to attend. All over the USSR the quarter of a million population of the couple of thousand communes takes the same part in the civic organisation, local and national, as do the kolkhosi. Whether or not these latter will gradually develop into communes, as many people suppose, but as the Soviet Government does not encourage, is a question of the future. At present it looks as if there was a tendency for individual ownership to reappear inside the commune. In order to increase the aggregate of livestock, the USSR People's Commissar of Agriculture has decreed that "every member of an agricultural commune has a right to acquire for his individual economy a cow, small producers' livestock and fowls."¹

The Hierarchy of Owner-Producers in Agriculture

The organisation of the owner-producer in agriculture stands plainly at a more rudimentary stage than that of the owner-producers in industry, which we described in the preceding section. The severe crisis of the past few years has stood in the way of any adoption of the hierarchical or pyramidal form of democratic centralism. No district councils representative of kolkhosi exist, nor is there any sign at present of the institution of an All-Union Congress of Collective Farmers. There is, accordingly, no central executive committee which such a congress would appoint. A preliminary stage to that of a representative "All-Union Congress of Collective Farmers" may have been the large gathering of "collective farm shock-brigaders" (udarniki) which was summoned to Moscow in February 1933. At this conference, attended by over 1500 local leaders of collective farm administrations from nearly all parts of the USSR, the difficulties and the prospects of these owner-producers were made the subject of stirring addresses by such outstanding ministers as Molotov, Kaganovich, Kalinin, Voroshilov and Yakovlev, together with Stalin himself. This conference at Moscow was followed during the spring of 1933 by others held for particular provinces.² A "Second All-Union

¹ "Collectivisation of Agriculture in the Soviet Union", by W. Ladejinsky, in *Political Science Quarterly*, March 1934.

² See the reports of speeches made at such conferences of udarniki in *Moscow Daily News*, February 15-20, 1933, and also February 1935; also *International Press Correspondence*, March 2 and May 26, 1933; *Speech at the First All-Union Congress of Collective Farm Shock Brigade Workers*, by J. Stalin (Moscow, 1933, 24 pp.); *The Great Offensive*, by Maurice Hindus, 1933, ch. vi. "Collectives", pp. 95-116.

At these conferences the delegates were invited, and their expenses were paid, by the USSR People's Commissar for the kolkhosi and peasantry, but invitations were issued in blank, a due proportion being sent to each province. The actual selection was made locally by vote among the whole number of udarniki. It was explicitly stated that many, if not most, of the delegates were non-Party men or women.

Congress of Kolkhos Udamniks" held at the end of 1934 adopted a detailed and elaborate model constitution for all kolkhosi, which was formally approved by the Sovnarkom of the USSR and by the Central Committee of the Communist Party on February 17, 1935. This model constitution was strongly recommended for adoption by the members' meeting of each of the 240,000 kolkhosi; now approaching 250,000.

The permanent central office in Moscow (Kolkhoscentre), from which was exercised some general supervision over all the collective farms in the USSR—or by which, at any rate, statistics were collected for the whole movement—has now been absorbed in the new commissariat, and is directly administered by the USSR People's Commissar for Agriculture (kolkhosi and peasantry). Probably one of the most important constitutional relations, apart from those with the Agricultural Commission of the Communist Party, are those with Gosplan, with which it must be frequently in consultation as to the annual formulation of the control figures of the General Plan, and the continued minor modifications which have to be made and adjusted.

Any hierarchical organisation of councils rising, tier after tier, from the members' meeting to an All-Union Congress of elected delegates is, in the case of the collective farms, frankly postponed. The authoritative regulation of such of the 240,000 farms as are imperfectly administered is, at present, more obvious than any organised expression of the desires and ideas of the fifteen million families who form the aggregate membership.

The vast majority of the 240,000 collective farms are, in fact, not yet wholly self-governing cooperative societies.¹ Such of them as have already made their agriculture successful, to the extent of maintaining their members, and their families, and of yielding to the government the amount of its levies for the agricultural tax, and in return for the use of its tractors and harvesters, its seeds and its fertilisers, do, in fact, manage their own affairs, by their own members' meetings; and get from the government, beyond the machines that they hire, no more than supervision and advice. For the rest there has had to be devised an elaborate system of administration by which the members' meetings have been, by an ingenious combination of education and persuasion, economic pressure and, in the last resort, drastic coercion, shown how they should go.

The Results in 1933

It is possibly useless to adduce aggregate figures of the yield of wheat during 1933 for the whole USSR—showing a considerable increase on any previous year—as evidence of the successful working of the system of collective farms. Nor can this success be proved by particular instances,

¹ But it seems ridiculous for a contributor to the pamphlet of the School of Slavonic Studies entitled *Collectivised Agriculture in the Soviet Union* (London, 1934, p. 30)—one who has been unable to visit the USSR—to see for himself—to declare "that the legal status of the members of collective farms is for all practical purposes equivalent to bondage".

any more than failure is proved by the most agonising letters of complaint, often of doubtful authenticity, which have been published abroad. It will, however, complete the picture if we give a summary of the report of one kolkhos, named "Successes of Stalin", in the Middle Volga region. This collective farm, it will be seen, made a great success in 1932, without waiting for the campaign of the Policy Section or relying on the advice of the Machine and Tractor Stations. "This collective farm, comprising 234 families, had just completed the distribution of its income for the current year, after fulfilling the year's programme of grain deliveries by August 15. A total of 227 tons of grain was sold to the government out of a total grain crop of 619 tons.

"The gross income of the farm for the year, estimated on the basis of the official prices for agricultural products, is close to 95,000 roubles. In addition to 235 tons of rye, 337 tons of wheat, 26 tons of oats and 19 tons of millet, the farm produced 66 tons of potatoes, 18 tons of sunflower seed and 1000 tons of hay and straw. After selling to the government the set quantity of agricultural products, the farm proceeded to collect a seed supply to be used for next year's sowing. In addition, a supply of grain was collected for the feeding of the horses, sheep and hogs owned by the collective. Some grain was also set aside to supply those peasants who have left to work in the cities, under agreements signed with industrial organisations.

"The total net monetary income of the collective farm from the sale of grain to the government and from other sources, amounted to 50,000 roubles. From this sum, the farm paid agricultural taxes of 1750 roubles, and insurance 1700 roubles. A 3300 rouble loan was repaid to the State Bank: 10 per cent of the gross income of the farm was turned into a common fund, which is used largely for capital construction on the farm. By decision of the farm members, an additional 4 per cent of the gross income was set aside for cultural purposes, to pay bonuses and similar expenses. Two thousand roubles were invested in stocks of the Tractor Centre and Incubator Centre, which supply the farm with the required tractors and incubators. About 4000 roubles was spent for kerosene and lubricating oil for the tractors, for repairs, and for administrative expenditure.

"After all these expenses were met, the farm still had nearly 27,000 roubles in cash, as well as 185 tons of wheat and considerable quantities of other agricultural products.

"Up to September 20, when the distribution was effected, 26,000 working days had been put in by the members of the collective. It was estimated that in order to complete the work on hand some 85,000 working days more will be required before the end of the year. The average pay for a working day will therefore be: 78 kopeks, plus 6.5 kilograms of grain, 2.0 kg. of hay, 14 kg. of straw, and various other farm products. *These amounts are from four to six times larger than the money and products received by the members per working day last year.*

"To stimulate better work, the two best field brigades (the groups in which the members work) received 10 per cent more per working day than the average, while two other brigades whose work was not up to the required level received 15 per cent less than average pay. . . . The collective farm members cultivate their own gardens and keep their own cattle and horses. This provides considerable additional income."¹

Let us end this complicated analysis of the "campaign on the agricultural front" by a description by an eye-witness of one of the members' meetings when the harvest had been got in. "On September 7," writes the American student whom we have already quoted, "the collective farm 'Matvaeva' celebrated the distribution of the first half of the grain shares. . . . The individual shares for the whole period ranged from 100 to 500 poods. Later in the day at the meeting . . . farmer after farmer rose to speak of the harvest, the problems that had been met and solved by the help of the head of the political section. . . . One elderly woman rose, shook her finger at the meeting, and reminded them '*when we read in the papers how such a harvest was possible we didn't believe it; now it is an accomplished fact.*' . . ." As an example of what has been accomplished in a brief seven months through the work of the political section, the collective farm 'Bolshevik' may be cited. Completely disorganised last year by kulak sabotage, the Bolshevik farm failed to harvest all its grain, failed in its grain deliveries, and the members themselves were short of grain. This year that same kolkhos is one of the leading farms in the district, and has been placed on the roll of honour for the whole of the North Caucasus. . . . There is new life in the villages."²

Such descriptive accounts by eye-witnesses of particular collective farms, although they may be quite accurate, do not enable us to come to any confident conclusion as to what is happening in the whole 240,000 of them. They are doubtless deliberately selected instances; and, in fact, they make no pretence of being anything else. Equally graphic descriptions can be obtained of the complete failure of collective farms to obtain any harvest at all, owing largely, as it is not denied, to the concerted refusal of the members to do any effective work at ploughing, weeding or harvesting, even to the extent of leaving themselves without seed, and occasionally without food during the winter.³ It is too soon to judge,

¹ *Moscow Daily News*, October 15, 1932.

² Article by F. E. Hurst on the Ustiabinsk Machine and Tractor Station, North Caucasus, in *Moscow Daily News*, October 15, 1933. Other successful kolkhosi are described and interesting descriptions of their working are given in *Supply and Trade in the USSR*, by W. Nodel, 1934, pp. 95-100.

³ We note that Mr. W. H. Chamberlin, who has now been transferred from Moscow to Tokyo, continues to assert (in various magazine articles in 1934-1935, and in his book *Russia's Iron Age*, 1935) that there was a terrible famine in 1932-1933, "one of the greatest human catastrophes since the world-war," which caused, from disease and starvation, some four or five million deaths beyond the normal mortality. After carefully weighing Mr. Chamberlin's various assertions we can find no evidence of there having been any "natural" or "climatic" famine in 1931-1934. There is abundant testimony from many sources that the shortage in the crop was, for the most part, "man-made". It is, indeed, not seriously disputed that in 1932 there was widespread refusal to sow,

on the one hand, whether the successful kolkhosi will repeat, in less favourable years, when the official pressure is lightened, the material successes of 1933 and 1934; or, on the other, whether the stern measures taken against those who failed to cultivate the land entrusted to them can overcome the ingrained habit of mind of the individual peasant, incapable of recognising his own gain in any product, however considerable, which has to be shared with others. German expert observers declare that the agricultural difficulties in the USSR are not yet over, and that not for several years can the food position be declared to be safe. There are two principal grounds for this conclusion. Whatever may be done by drastic administration to compel the sullen farmers to cultivate effectively, this will not restore the slaughtered horses and cattle, sheep and pigs. The diminution of livestock had, in 1933, not yet stopped (except for pigs); although it is claimed that in 1934 the decrease was arrested in all but horses. Even if the aggregate total begins to rise during 1935, it must take several years to bring to maturity the animals now being born.

The second ground taken by those who know best the mind of a peasantry in any European country, is the sheer impossibility of persuading the elder kolkhos member to change his ideas and his habits. He has not yet got over his resentment at being deposed from his position of family autocrat,¹ nor will he easily be weaned from his habit of seeking always to do less work than his fellow-members, on the argument that only in this way can he hope to "get even" with them, as they will, of course, be seeking to do less than he does! It is not enough, such critics declare, to leave to the kolkhos member the full product of his own garden, his own poultry, his own beehives, his own pig and even his own

neglect to weed, and failure to reap, just as there had been in previous years deliberate slaughter of every kind of livestock, amounting to no fewer than 150 million animals. This "man-made" shortage it was that Mr. Chamberlin calls a famine. How far food scarcity was aggravated by undue exactions by the government agents from a population manifestly guilty of sabotage may well be a matter of controversy. We find, in the statements of Mr. Chamberlin and other believers in the famine, nothing that can be called statistical evidence of widespread abnormal mortality; though it may be inferred that hardships in particular villages must have led, here and there, to some rise in the local death-rate. The continuous increase in the total population of the Ukraine and North Caucasus, as of the USSR as a whole, does not seem to have been interrupted, though the migration from the rural districts to the cities has continued, and may even have increased. The controversy is discussed in Louis Fischer's book *Soviet Journey*, 1935, pp. 170-172, in which he incidentally says, "*I myself saw, all over the Ukraine in October 1932, huge stacks of grain which the peasants had refused to gather in, and which were rotting. This was their winter's food. Then these same peasants starved.*"

¹ In many collective farms a way of dealing with the apathy and sullenness of the elderly peasants, who were frequently found sitting gloomily on the seat in front of their houses, whilst the young people were working in the fields, has been found. They have been formally appointed "inspectors of quality", and given the duty of superintending the work and reporting on the quality of the crops harvested. They wear a badge, and walk about with an air of authority! (see the cases cited in *Reise durch hundert Kollektivwirtschaften*, by L. P. Boross, Moscow, 1934, p. 176). This ingenious encouragement of the aged has been carried even further. In various districts, congresses of these inspectors of quality have been held, attended by hundreds of elderly peasants from the neighbouring kolkhosi, who have been addressed by leading statesmen, and treated as persons occupying key-positions in the local agriculture!

cow. This concession to individualism may, it is said, even make matters worse, by tempting the disloyal collective farmer to put all his energy into his private enterprise. We do not ourselves pretend to a judgment. But we suggest that the Bolshevik Government may not be wrong in putting its hopes, in the kolkhosi, as elsewhere, on the young people, who (as it is not always remembered) constitute about half the population. These will have increasingly been nurtured in a collective atmosphere; and, according to all accounts, they like it much better than the life of the individual peasant. So, it seems, do most of the women. If the women and the children, and the young people, who together constitute three-fourths of the whole population, prefer the kolkhos, the kolkhos will endure. This, at least, is the judgment of the observer who probably knows the Russian peasant better than any other writer. "Of one thing we may be assured," declares Mr. Maurice Hindus, "so long as the soviets endure there will be no return to individual farming. I have the feeling that, even if the soviets were to collapse, Russian agriculture would remain collectivised with control in the hands of the peasants instead of the government. The advantages of collectivisation as a method of farming are indisputable. There are even now scores of highly successful collective farms in the Black Earth region and in the Ukraine. Collectivisation has within it the power to convert Russia from a backward to a progressive agricultural nation, as individual landholding with its inevitable small acreage never can."¹

(c) MISCELLANEOUS ASSOCIATIONS OF OWNER-PRODUCERS

Needless to say, the advantages of association in the work of production are not confined to the cultivators and handicraftsmen, and other producers in agriculture or small scale industry. We shall describe in the following chapter the entirely distinct consumers' organisation of the distribution of commodities, together with the productive services incidental thereto. But even specifically within the sphere of production, where the two main types of manufacturing artel and collective farm count by far the largest numbers of members, we have to notice, as part of the social structure of production in the USSR, various other kinds of "cooperatives", often "mixed" in type, which are seldom described, but which cannot be ignored.

We must, however, first write off, as superseded by subsequent developments, practically all the array of independent agricultural cooperative societies that existed in the USSR as recently as 1927.² At that date

¹ *The Great Offensive*, by Maurice Hindus, 1933, p. 114.

² Apart from the voluminous Russian sources, the following more accessible publications may be cited: *The Cooperative Movement in Russia*, by J. V. Bubnoff (Manchester, 1917, 162 pp.); *The Cooperative Movement in Soviet Russia*, by Elsie Terry Blanc (New York, 1924); *The Cooperative Movement in Soviet Russia* (International Labour Office, 1925); *Die Konsumgenossenschaften in Sowjetrussland*, by Lubinov (Berlin, 1926, 20 pp.); *Consumers' Cooperation in the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics*, by P. Popoff (London, 1927, 46 pp.); *Die Genossenschaften in sozialistischen Aufbau*, by W. Tikhomirov (1927); *The Russian Cooperative Movement*, by N. Barou and E. F. Wise (1927); *Die landwirt-*

there were specialised societies for the assistance of the makers of butter and cheese and other milk products; societies for poultry and eggs; for potatoes; for grapes and wine; for horse- and cattle-breeding and the rearing of sheep; for tobacco; for cotton; for flax; for sugar-beet; for the production and distribution of various kinds of seed; for bee-keeping and what not. There were a number of credit societies on a mutual basis. But most of these societies, or the various federations and unions that they formed among themselves, combined the joint marketing of their members' produce with whatever preparation for sale could conveniently be undertaken collectively. Thus, there were cooperative creameries and cheese factories by the thousand; many hundreds of cooperative workshops and mills for the preparation of flax; hundreds of cooperative factories and distilleries for the manufacture both of food preparations and of alcohol from the extensive potato crop. In almost all cases the cooperative society supplied the technical instruction appropriate to the enterprise; selected seed; the best kinds of implements, and plans and models of improved buildings. It undertook the collection and storage of the produce; arranged bulk sales to the consumers' cooperatives or the government trusts; opened up new markets; organised exhibitions in the cities, and concerted with the People's Commissar for Foreign Trade as to the widening of the range of the export trade. A large proportion of all the agricultural produce of the USSR, apart from cereals, was, in 1927, handled by these independent cooperative associations. In the cases of milk products, flax, potatoes, tobacco and sugar-beet, these associations dealt with 60 to 90 per cent of the whole production of the country.

This extensive development of voluntary and independent organisations of agricultural producers, which in 1927 numbered 80,000 separate societies, uniting as many as eight or nine million peasant households in voluntary cooperation, had, by 1932, completely disappeared from view. So far as the present writers could learn, all the 80,000 societies have ceased to exist as such; their numerous federal associations have been "liquidated"; and the various "centres" that they maintained at Moscow have been absorbed into the new USSR Commissariats of State Farms and of Agriculture respectively. A certain proportion of the local cooperative societies (including the Siberian creameries) have simply become collective farms (kolkhosi). Wherever the collective farms have been established, the credit societies have become unnecessary, as the individual members have little need of loans, whilst the State Bank supplies any credit required by the kolkhos itself. The great development

schaftlichen Genossenschaften in der Sowjetunion (Berlin, 1928), translated as *Agricultural Cooperation in the Soviet Union*, by G. Ratner (London, 1929); *The Cooperative Movement in Russia during the War*, by Kayden and Antsiferov (1930); *Les Voies du développement de la coopération de production en URSS*, by W. Tikhomirov (1931); *The Year Book of Agricultural Cooperation* (London, 1933); and, as to credit societies, *Economic Survey* (Gosbank), November and December 1930, and *Russian Cooperative Banking*, by N. Barou (London, 1931); and for all forms now existing, *Consumers' Cooperation in the USSR*, by Leslie A. Paul (1934).

of scientific institutes, which now place at the peasants' disposal all the facts and suggestions that he requires, may have rendered unnecessary much of the service of advice and instruction rendered by the specialist cooperative societies and federal unions. Yet it cannot be ignored that the summary "liquidation" of so extensive a growth of social tissue involves a loss to the peasantry which may not yet have been entirely made good to the whole twenty-five million households, by the more systematic organisation of state banks and commissariats, institutes and kolkhosi. Some miscellaneous developments of these we have now to describe.

The Fishermen's Kolkhosi.—In no part of the organised structure of Soviet Communism do we find a more striking example of Lenin's principle of constitutional multiformity than in the industry of fishing, in which the USSR has now a greater annual output than Great Britain or Norway, and stands second only to Japan among all the nations of the world.¹ This industry is almost entirely a creation of the last fifteen years. Prior to the war there was practically no Russian deep-sea fishing, no other preserving than salting, no canning of the catch, and only an extensive but unorganised individual shore and river fishing, which sank under the disturbance of war and famine to its lowest point in 1921. In 1929 the Soviet Government began the establishment of deep-sea fishing (including whaling), with an ever-increasing development of refrigeration and other methods of preservation; processing of various kinds; various incidental manufactures, and, finally, canning on a large scale. The capital investment in up-to-date fleets of motor vessels, shore depôts and factories, and the canning industry, during 1929–1934, amounts to nearly 500 million roubles. At the present time (1935) there are at work more than 100 ocean-going trawlers, as well as larger vessels; 8 shipbuilding wharves for repairing and increasing this fleet; 21 refrigerating establishments; 9 ice-making works; 26 barrel factories; 250 radio transmitting and receiving stations; 27 fish-waste factories, and many incidental establishments. The annual catch of this state fishery department now amounts to nearly half a million tons of fish, or about twice as much as the total catch of all the fishermen of 1921; a remarkable achievement of only five years' constructive work.

But the Soviet Government, in establishing this great industry, in which all the workers are directly employed at salaries or wages, had no wish or intention to establish a monopoly, or to supersede the coast and river fisheries, by which some hundreds of thousands of fishermen are

¹ The latest accessible information about the USSR fisheries is given in the article by Professor A. Petrov, entitled "The Fisheries of the Soviet Union, a New and Efficient Industry", in the Supplement of *The Financial News* (London), November 5, 1934. This, however, says little about the fisher kolkhosi, for which should be consulted the decrees and regulations of July 1931 and September 1932, and an article by I. Ivanovsky, entitled "The Collective Fishery System in the USSR", in *Voks Socialist Construction in the USSR*, vol. vi., 1934. See also *Das Fischerwesen Russlands*, by William F. Douglas (Berlin, 1930, pp. 206).

earning an independent living. On the contrary, these self-employing "owner-producers", all round the coasts of the USSR, and in all its great lakes and rivers, have been systematically encouraged; helped in their equipment and marketing; and finally brought together in a network of self-governing kolkhosi. The result has been that, concurrently with the rapid development of the state fisheries, the output of the self-governing owner-producers has also increased year by year, so that they can claim, in 1935, to be catching, in the aggregate, something like 60 per cent more weight of fish than they did in 1921, with a larger average income per head, and greater security and amenity.

We cannot recount all the stages in this friendly cooperation between the Soviet Government and the independent fishermen. The first few years after the revolution witnessed various not very successful attempts at a revival of the industry. In 1921 there began an apparently spontaneous organisation of the coastal fishermen in local artels, or communes, which presently established district and provincial unions for common purposes, and in 1923 the All-Russian Cooperative Industrial Union of Fishermen (Vsekopromrybaksoyus), with a centre at Moscow. But there was still comparatively little intercourse between the fishermen of the different coasts of the USSR, and many villages of fishermen remained untouched by the new movement of thought. In 1931, partly as a result of the growth of the new state fisheries, the various organisations of fisher kolkhosi were reorganised on a common plan, and united with some others which had meanwhile joined the hunters' associations, in an All-Union Congress of Fishing Kolkhosi (Rybakolkhossoyus). Since that date nearly all the professional fishermen in the USSR, some 300,000 in number (other than the wage-earners of the state fishery department),¹ have joined one or other of the 1500 fisher kolkhosi which now form the federal association.

The special note of this federation seems to be the considerable autonomy retained by the several fisher kolkhosi, and their deliberate limitation of the functions entrusted to their delegates to little more than marketing, the supply of equipment at wholesale prices, and the giving of technical instruction and advice. The 1500 kolkhosi elect delegates, roughly in proportion to membership, to the annual session of the congress of the particular regional union to which each of them belongs. The 42 regional union congresses (12 of them representing exclusively the kolkhosi fishing the fresh water of lakes and rivers) maintain each the smallest possible secretarial and accounting staff. The All-Union Congress, composed of delegates of the 42 union congresses, meets only once a year to re-elect

¹ The wage-earners employed in the government fishing fleet are members of the Fishermen's Trade Union (in 1934 divided into the three trade unions of the fishermen of the northern, eastern and southern seas). There are still a small number of independent fishermen in the north and east of Siberia, who are mostly united in kolkhosi forming part of the "Integral" cooperative federation, presently to be described. It should be added that a few of the consumers' cooperative societies carry on, by employment at wages, small freshwater fisheries for their own needs.

its Executive Board of thirty-five members, and discuss the annual report. This Executive Board, which is unpaid, meets in Moscow only very occasionally, and leaves the daily work to the presidium of five members whom it appoints. These five salaried members, who give their whole time to their duties, regard themselves not as leaders or administrators of a great industry, but merely as organisers and technical advisers, two or three of whom, at all times, are on visit to the distant kolkhosi.

What, then, does the cooperative organisation provide for its members? The writers had an opportunity, in 1932, of seeing, on the shores of the Sea of Azov, one of these fisher kolkhosi from the inside. The North Caucasus Krai included several regional fisher unions, to which, at that date, there belonged, 77 fisher kolkhosi,¹ with some 18,000 members, all working on the Sea of Azov or on the neighbouring shores of the Black Sea. The federal organisation provided the fisher kolkhosi with equipment, advice and instructions. It supplied its members with excellent thigh boots, nets and other equipment at wholesale prices. It provided advice in fishing methods, information as to weather and other prospects, and instruction in book-keeping. Each kolkhos, containing between one hundred and three hundred fishermen, owned collectively the boats, nets and other equipment, including sometimes a team of oxen to drag the heavily weighted net to land. It worked in brigades of several dozen men and boys each, who united in the operations under the direction of a leader of their own choice. Each catch, involving an hour or two's work, was straightway landed on the wharf belonging to the state fish trust, or other purchaser, where the fish were at once cleaned, salted or iced, packed and despatched. The fisher kolkhos was thus concerned only with catching the fish. It was governed entirely by its own members' meeting, which elected a president, as well as delegates to the regional congress.²

The financial organisation was peculiar. In 1932 each kolkhos made its own contract for the sale of a specified proportion of the fish arising from its catch during the ensuing three months. Anything beyond the quantity contracted for, the kolkhos might sell as and where it pleased. These contracts were, in 1932, made simultaneously for the whole district at a meeting of representatives of the kolkhosi as sellers, and of the state

¹ Only one of these kolkhosi, namely, that of Anaba, was in 1932 a completely collectivised commune.

Some of the fisher kolkhosi maintain their own subsidiary enterprises by wage labour, such as the weaving and repairing of nets, and even the raising of crops of foodstuffs for the members' households!

² In the autonomous republic of the Crimea there were, in 1932, 13 fishing kolkhosi along the coast between Eupatoria and the Sea of Azov, with 4500 members, supplying the land-dwellers with sturgeon, turbot, mullet, eels and pilchards. "We no longer work for masters," said the seventy-three-year-old leader; "our boats, our nets, our fish are ours. We discuss our shortcomings in production conferences. . . . The bad results of this year have been largely our own fault. The youngsters in our collective must learn how to catch fish. Again and again I tell them that there's no luck for a fisherman. It's all in knowing how to do it. And we'll best serve the revolution when we know how to provide the tons of fish needed by the country" (article on "Udamniks of the Sea", by Ed. Falkowski, in *Moscow Daily News*, October 15, 1932).

fish trust, as well as some consumers' cooperatives and large factories and buyers. It was usual, we were told, for the prices for each weight of fish to be willingly raised for the seasons in which the catch is normally least. The kolkhos paid no subscription towards the expenses of the regional organisation, or of the All-Union central office. It was the buyer who paid a fixed contribution for these purposes—in 1932 $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent on the price paid for the fish—to the regional organisation. Thus, the kolkhos was free to dispose of the whole of the contract price as its members might determine. What it habitually did was to allocate 35 per cent of the proceeds of each catch to a fund for renewal or increase of capital equipment (including amortisation of any loan); and the remaining 65 per cent to the members of the brigade making each particular catch. This lump sum was shared according to a fixed ratio, among five grades of men and boys, the lowest apprentice counting for one, and each of the four higher grades getting one-fifth in excess of the grade below it; the highest, therefore, counting for two. Of the commission of $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent on the price, payable by the purchaser direct to the secretary of the regional council, 4 per cent was retained for this council's expenses; 2 per cent was allotted downward to the local council, whilst the remaining $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent was remitted upward to the Moscow centre.¹

On the remodelling of the federation in 1932, the marketing arrangements were so far changed as to give the government the advantage of a systemised All-Union arrangement. Now the government annually enters into a simple contract to buy a specified uniform quota of the aggregate catch, from each kolkhos in membership, which is arranged by negotiation between the Commissariat of Supplies and the presidium of the All-Union Federation, and embodied in a general contract ratified by the Executive Board, specifying not only the amount, but also the price, the dates of delivery and the method of payment. In addition, each kolkhos negotiates supplementary conditions about details with the local state factories at which each catch is delivered.

The price paid by the government, which, it is claimed, the fishermen's board of thirty-five virtually fixes, with merely the concurrence of the government, is, roughly speaking, 20 per cent lower than could be obtained by the kolkhosi if they sold their catch in the open market by retail. But the kolkhosi get, for the government quota, the advantage not only of a fixed price all the year round without the trouble of obtaining transport, or the risk of waste, or the expense of retail selling, but also the privilege of obtaining the products of the state factories of equipment, etc., at wholesale prices.² If the Executive Board cannot agree with the govern-

¹ The financial arrangements have since been changed. The government or other buyer now pays only the price agreed upon. The expenses of the organisation are met by levies on the kolkhosi, usually of no more than 3 or 4 per cent of the proceeds of sales.

² We understand that the Executive Board does not always find it easy to convince the separate kolkhosi that the price demanded for the government quota is as high as might reasonably be asked of so large a buyer. It is not always remembered that the government provides the motor engines and other equipment, thigh boots and special

ment as to the price, this is settled by arbitration. All fish in excess of the quota may be disposed of as each kolkhos pleases. Supplies of fresh fish are eagerly sought by such independent buyers as the consumers' cooperative societies and the departments of "self supply" of factories, mines and railways; and fresh fish finds also a ready sale at any accessible open market. To these buyers the kolkhosi habitually charge a higher price than that obtained for the government quota, in order to compensate for the trouble and risk involved in such separate sales. The associated kolkhosi have, since 1932, abandoned to the government all methods of "processing" the fish, whether by way of refrigeration or other ways of preserving, or by preparation of caviare, or by canning, all of which can most economically be conducted on a large scale.

The only tax levied by the government on the fishermen is one of 3 per cent on the aggregate value of the total year's catch, in return for the use of the public waters and for the fish taken therefrom. The kolkhosi are all willingly cooperating with the Commissariat of Supplies in measures for protecting the fishing grounds from exhaustion, and now annually return to the water some fifteen billions of under-sized fish.

The 1500 fisher kolkhosi own over 65,000 fishing boats, mostly built by the members themselves, of which some 5000 are equipped with petrol motors supplied by the government on easy terms. The men are now demanding more powerful motors, even up to 150 horse-power, to enable them to fish at greater distances from shore. Meanwhile they are assisted, in about thirty of the fishing-grounds, by motor-boat stations maintained by the government for service on payment by any brigade or kolkhos desiring them.

The earnings of the kolkhos members are said to be steadily rising. In many districts they are reported to be between 2000 and 2500 roubles a year for the average man; but in others they do not reach so high a sum. Considerable "cultural" advances are reported. In some districts hundreds of women take part in the work, and become kolkhos members. There are floating clubs, with libraries and musical instruments, maintained by some of the kolkhosi. There are crèches for the infants. Nearly all the members join the local consumers' cooperative societies, whose recently rising demands for books and gramophones, wireless sets and bicycles, indicate an increasing margin of unspoken income.

Integral Cooperatives.—This association, unique in constitutional form and in its peculiar combination of functions, was established only in July 1934, as the outcome of a decade of experience with organisations of other types.¹

clothing, and many foodstuffs, at specially low prices. Sometimes a kolkhos will be exceptionally successful in its sales to other purchasers, and is reluctant to take into account its frequent losses by failure to get prompt transport, etc. When the catch has been unexpectedly small, appeals are made to the government to make an addition to the agreed price; and this, we are told, is frequently conceded.

¹ Not much has been published, even (so far as we know) in Russian, upon Integral Cooperation; and our information is derived mainly from personal enquiry. A volume

We trace its origin to the hierarchy of local associations established in 1924 by and for the large numbers of hunters and trappers of wild animals. The membership included hunters of different types, whether (a) "professional" hunters and trappers, who lived entirely by this vocation and formed only 15 per cent of the membership; (b) semi-professionals, who accounted for another 50 per cent, and who pursued the vocation for gain or "for the pot", but combined it with another occupation; and (c) finally, also those "amateurs", about one-third of the whole, who hunted only for amusement. The local associations and their regional unions set themselves to render the services that each of these classes required. They provided in some districts a certain amount of watching of the forests and the game. They supplied the hunters with all the implements of their vocation at little above wholesale prices. They stored and sold, when desired, the products of the chase. But the hunters' associations in some parts of the USSR did more than this. In the sparsely inhabited regions of the north (as, for instance, Tobolsk, Tomsk-Narym, Turukhansk, Kirensk and Priangarsk), where few other institutions exist, the hunters' societies united the features of other kinds of cooperatives; developing fishing and the breeding of reindeer; providing fish canneries and meat factories; supplying all the necessities of the villages, and marketing all their disposable products. Practically the whole adult population of these areas belonged to the hunters' societies, to which they contributed several hundred thousand members. The hunters' cooperative societies in other areas of the USSR came to number nearly 1000, with some 600,000 members, organised in about 6000 groups. Each society was governed by general meetings of its members, who elected a president, and usually a small presidium. The societies were grouped in thirty-five regional federations, with councils of delegates from the societies within each region. These regional federations sent delegates to meet in occasional All-Union Congresses of hunters and trappers from all parts, and maintained an active central office in Moscow.

But this widespread cooperative organisation proved lacking in stability. Both its membership and its functions were too heterogeneous for lasting unity, over a geographical area so vast as the USSR. The divergence of interest between the professional hunters and trappers, on the one hand, and, on the other, the sporting amateurs and the peasants who hunted only occasionally, led to perpetual conflicts. In 1933, by decree of TSIK and Sovnarkom of the USSR of August 17, the "integral" societies of the Far North, consisting largely of "national minorities", were set up as an independent system on the principle of the kolkhos. At last the All-Union Federation of Hunters was finally dissolved, and a new and more limited federal body, confined practically to Northern and Far-Eastern Siberia, but maintaining a central office at Moscow, was established

(in Russian) entitled *The Far North, a Collection of Materials* (Moscow, 1934, 176 pp.), being a reprint of a special supplement of the journal *The Soviet North*, contains (p. 106, etc.) details and statistics as to Integral Cooperation.

on July 25, 1934, by a congress of delegates representing local cooperative societies in these areas.

The new body was, so far as hunting was concerned, from the first dominated by those for whom the pursuit of game is a constant means of livelihood, taking up at least half their time; and these are now very largely concentrated in Northern and Eastern Siberia. The amateurs throughout the Union now find their wants supplied and their interests attended to by the voluntary organisations dealing with "sport" of every kind. The peasants, occasionally hunting "for the pot", are now mostly members of collective farms, and dispose of their furs directly by communicating with the nearest agents of the Commissariat of Foreign Trade, or its Fur Trust.

The new federation, however, retains in membership the main bulk of the "mixed" cooperative societies within the geographical area with which it deals, whether these unite, in one and the same society, both production and distribution, or take on the form of kolkhosi, specialising either on agriculture or on fishing, or on reindeer breeding. We are told that, in this area, largely inhabited by different tribes of non-Russian stock, the people are at a stage of development too primitive to allow of their becoming members of various cooperative or other bodies having distinct and separate purposes. Whatever cooperative societies they establish almost invariably take on a "mixed" form, which is styled "integral", and which permits them to include, in one and the same society, hunting, fishing, agriculture, stock-breeding, the marketing of produce of every kind, and the retailing of all the commodities that their members desire. It is a curious example of the feeling in favour of uniformity that the vast geographical area over which this form of cooperation prevails¹ is abandoned to the societies preferring it. Equally, it is an instance of the policy of "cultural autonomy" that no attempt is made by the USSR Government to impose on these "national minorities" what, in other parts of the USSR, has proved a superior form of organisation.² Neither Centrosoyus, representing the consumers' cooperative societies, nor Vsekorybaksoyus, representing the fisher kolkhosi, seeks to extend to this area, nor endeavours to entice away the local membership. The USSR Commissariat of the Timber Industries and the State Fishery Department of the USSR Commissariat of Supplies penetrate into this territory without competing with the "integral" societies, which sell their furs direct to the Fur Trust of the USSR Commissariat of Foreign

¹ The area of the activities of the Integral Cooperatives is described as including the Northern Krai, the Ostyak okrug, the Vogulsk okrug, the Narym Krai, the East Siberian Krai, Buriat Mongolia and the Far Eastern Krai. The membership, alike of the kolkhosi and of the primitive productive cooperative societies—amounting in all to something like 300,000 adults—is reported to be about half made up of "national minorities" (*The Far North* (in Russian), Moscow, 1934, p. 106, etc.).

² Thus the kolkhosi of the Far North are not pressed to assume the form in which all the land-holdings are merged in one undivided field. They are left in the stage in which each member retains his own instruments of production, and combines only for labour in specific operations of agriculture, or during the seasons for hunting or fishing.

Trade and their fish to the RSFSR Commissariat of Local Supplies, or to any other purchasers whom they can reach. The RSFSR Commissariat of Local Trade maintains in the area, principally in the more considerable centres of population, its own trading depôts (Gostorgovlya); whilst the USSR Commissariat of Foreign Trade, through its Fur Trust, and the USSR Commissariat of Supplies, through such organs as Soyus Pushnina, Rybtrest, etc., contract with all or most of the local productive societies to buy a specified quota of their output at agreed prices.¹

The Association of Integral Cooperatives included, in 1934, 869 societies termed simply "integral"; 610 consumers' societies, mostly more or less "mixed" in function; 243 cooperative productive associations, many of whom deal also in commodities for their members' consumption; and over 700 kolkhosi, predominantly for agriculture or reindeer breeding, but including some mainly for fishing. These separate societies are all governed by periodical meetings of their members, which elect a president or manager, and a small presidium. Nearly 1000 of them, which carry on retail trading in household commodities, have specific trading districts assigned to them, varying in extent from about 3000 square kilometres (Nenetsky okrug) up to about 23,700 square kilometres (Chukotsky okrug). But all the societies, including the kolkhosi, are united in 263 regional unions by rayons, okrugs, oblasts or krais (of which there are 239 for rayons, 21 for okrugs and 3 for oblasts and krais). It is presumably these 263 local unions that will elect delegates to the Congress of Integral Cooperative Societies that may be periodically summoned.

The organisational structure of the "Far North" of Siberia is plainly in an inchoate condition; unlikely, as it seems to the present writers, to remain long without substantial change, as to the nature of which no prediction is offered.

War Invalids.—The seven years of war, 1914–1920, left in the USSR an incalculable number of partially disabled men, whose existence imposed on the Soviet Government a problem transcending in magnitude and difficulty that of any other of the belligerents. It was dealt with on different lines from those followed by the other countries. The absence, in the USSR, of any vested interests of profit-making employers, and of any objection by soviet trade unionism, made it possible for the Soviet Government to set the partially disabled men to work, on their own account, upon any productive enterprise within their capacity. The form usually adopted was that of the artel. The "war invalids" capable of any productive work were invited to join a widespread federal association of owner-producers, largely self-governing in character, which in 1927 numbered 2861 little local societies, with over 38,000 working members. The association has been liberally assisted from government funds, in order to enable it to start a large number of industries for its members,

¹ The "plan" for fish in 1934 was fixed at 698,000 centners, whilst that for furs, etc., amounted to 9,980,000 roubles' worth (*The Far North* (in Russian), p. 106; Model Agreement (in Russian) for the supply and delivery of furs and skins: Moscow, Koiz, 1934).

usually on a small scale, by which the disabled men are enabled to earn a proportion of the maintenance allowed to them, the deficit being met from public funds. The separate enterprises, in 1927 numbering over 7000, are of the most varied kinds. There are small flour mills and oil factories, little distilleries and cheesemaking centres, together with fruit and vegetable gardens, growing for the local market. There are bakeries making confectionery; shoe-making and tailoring workshops, and furniture factories. Some men keep bees and poultry; others man the numerous book and newspaper stalls on the basis of a commission on sales; or drive carts and lorries in the execution of a succession of jobs of transportation. The gross income of the association in 1925-1926 was 264 million roubles, of which rather more than one-third was the net product of the members' own labour, the balance being found from public funds.

In due course, as the number of war invalids capable of work gradually decreased, the same organisation was utilised for the "invalids of industry", men or women partially disabled by accident or industrial disease in the factory or the mine. At the present time these invalids of industry far outnumber, among those at work, the men disabled in the war. Out of a total of about 100,000 members of the federation who are in one or other form of employment, about 70,000 are members of manufacturing artels, whilst the others are in artels of service, supplying part of the personnel of hotels, theatres, cinemas, the large retailing establishments and other government departments, clubs, hospitals and educational institutions. All partially disabled men are encouraged to join one or other of these artels and to continue to perform such work as they can, as this is so much better for them than vegetating in idleness on a meagre pension. Such workers are often trained free of charge in special technical institutes for the disabled. They have often their own clubs for suitable recreation, and their own sanatoria and rest-houses in the Crimea or elsewhere. There are special summer schools in the country for the children of the disabled. A few of these manufacturing artels of partially disabled men have become completely self-supporting, and able to allow their members a small bonus in addition to their stipulated wages. Members may work in these artels whilst receiving the pensions awarded to them in respect of war disabilities, or those in respect of disabilities due to industrial accidents or diseases, or merely for old age after long service.¹ It is argued that the addition that they make to the aggregate supply of commodities and services is clearly a national gain, whilst the pensioners themselves benefit both physically and mentally by continuing to perform such work as is within their powers. This double advantage, it is claimed, far outweighs the cost to the public funds of the possible overlapping of

¹ The pensions to war invalids and those to the widows and children of deceased men of war service, like allowances to the blind, the deaf and dumb, the crippled, etc., are awarded and paid by the Commissariats of Social Welfare of the several republics. The pensions payable in respect of disabilities due to industrial accidents and diseases, like those in respect of old age after long service, are payable from the social insurance funds, now administered by the trade union organisation.

pension and subsidy. There seems, in the USSR, no more reason for denying to any worker the wage that he earns, merely because he enjoys a pension awarded to him in respect of previous service, than merely because he owns a balance in the Savings Bank.

(d) ASSOCIATIONS OF ARTISTIC AND INTELLECTUAL PRODUCERS

Artistic and Intellectual Workers.—It is difficult to keep account of the various other associations of owner-producers, of which there are possibly, in the wide expanse of the USSR, many hundreds. Incredible as it may seem to those who believe the USSR to be groaning in one all-pervading tyranny, these bodies form and dissolve and reform at the will of the members, with the least possible legal or official formalities. Equally difficult is it to discover which of them remain outside the federation of incops that has been already described. Thus, to cite only a few examples, the artists (chiefly painters, sculptors and architects) had, in 1931, an association of some 1500 members, called Khudozhnik (the Artist). This society provides its members a certain amount of accommodation in collective studios, runs for their service a small but efficient colour factory, organises exhibitions for the sale of their works, and even gives them credit when they are more than usually hard up! The photographers, whose art is highly developed in the USSR, have an artel of their own on similar lines. Those who are associated with the art side of the equipment of the theatre have another. A special group of artistic workers in wood and lacquer, largely concentrated in the little town of Palekh, who have for generations lived by carving and painting religious icons, have reorganised their industry in a cooperative society for the production of what is now in greater demand, namely, wooden boxes, trays and *plaques*, beautifully painted and lacquered, without religious associations.

The authors seem to have had from time to time, in addition to their professional associations of authors and journalists as such, a whole series of cooperative publishing societies of one sort or another. There is a society of scientists at Leningrad which publishes works on physical and biological science; not in rivalry with the gigantic state publishing enterprise of the RSFSR, but in supplement of its work. There are similar publishing societies in one or more of the other constituent republics for works in their own languages. A separate enterprise at Moscow is that of the Cooperative Society of Foreign Workers in the USSR, which issues, for the instruction of the German, American and British residents, a series of books and pamphlets in their own language, most of them describing particular features of soviet industry, agriculture and social institutions.¹

¹ Publishing is a side-line of many of the other organisations that we have elsewhere described, from trade unions to universities, from the various kinds of cooperative societies to the multitude of voluntary associations with their extraordinary diversity of objects and purposes; not excepting the Red Army and the Communist Party itself. Sometimes they have their own printing press. They always have to get paper from the People's Commissars in charge of the government paper mills and of all imports. All alike are

The World of Labour in the USSR

The dominant impression made by the survey of the organisation of Man as a Producer will, we think, be one of multiformity. There could hardly be a wider divergence in constitutional structure than that between the 154 highly centralised trade unions (in round numbers eighteen million members) and the loosely federated twenty thousand cooperative societies of owner-producers in industry (three million members); or between either of these bodies and, on the one hand, the 240,000 kolkhosi, or collective farms (thirty million members), or, on the other, the 1500 fisher kolkhosi (300,000 members). To add even further to the multiformity, there is still to be reckoned the strange breed of "Integral" cooperatives (300,000 members), whose chief peculiarity seems to be to jumble up together many of the characteristics in which all the rest differ from each other; not to mention also the exceptional variety afforded by the federation of partially disabled men and women, who work at every conceivable occupation, and find their ground for separate association in the common feature of physical disability of one or other kind.

These fifty-odd million men and women working in the production of commodities and services are, it will be noted, of different kinds or grades. Some would be classed as brain workers, others as manual workers. Their personal remuneration, and, with it, their standards of living, vary considerably; and whilst the level is undoubtedly rising all round, there is visible no tendency either to identity or to that equality which is stigmatised as a dead level. But amid all the multiformity of constitutional structure, and all the heterogeneity of work and grade, of wages and standard of living, there is one feature that is constant and ubiquitous in all the "productive" organisations. There is no segregation by wealth, or social class, or position in the hierarchy. In every enterprise, large or small, urban or rural, the directors and managers, the technicians and specialists, the book-keepers and the gate-keepers, the skilled mechanics and the general labourers are members of one and the same organisation, whether it be called a trade union, an industrial cooperative society, a collective farm, a fishermen's collective, an integral cooperative, or a society of war invalids. The ground for their common membership is their common interest in the enterprise in which they find themselves associated, and their similar common interest in the other enterprises engaged in the same branch of production throughout the USSR. Not only in their daily work and their monthly pay is there this common interest among all grades, but also in their other conditions of life. The hours of labour; the safety and amenity of the place of work; the provision of medical attendance and hospital treatment; the whole range of

subject, just as the government publishing houses themselves are, to the universal censorship. All of them, moreover, work in friendly cooperation with Ogiz (the principal state publishing house at Moscow) and with the publishing houses of the various constituent and autonomous republics.

social insurance ; the adequate provision and proper maintenance of dwelling-places ; the arrangements for the care and education of children ; the means of recreation, holidays, clubs and rest-houses, music and the theatre and endless other matters concern workers of all kinds.

What, in all this upgrowth of collective organisation, practically all new or remade since the Revolution, has happened to "workers' control" ?¹ Less than half the aggregate of "producers" in the USSR, it will be seen, are working under a contract of service at all (the eighteen million members of trade unions, together with the four million co-workers who, for one or other reason, are, as yet, non-members). Much more numerous are the various kinds of owner-producers for whom the trade union form is inappropriate. These owner-producers, whether in industrial artels (three millions), in collective farms (thirty millions) or in fishermen's associations (300,000), are themselves the owners of the commodities they produce, from the sale of which, after defraying all expenses and the government taxation, their remuneration is derived. They themselves direct, by their own members' meetings, their individual and combined labour, together with the conditions under which they work, and the speed and regularity of their exertions. But they have no monopoly. They have themselves to decide, in meeting assembled, and in constant competition with other forms of production, and other kinds of commodities, how they will satisfy the demands of the consumers of their products, and the users of the services that they are prepared to render. Their subjection is to the consumers whom they directly serve.

There is, of course, the further alternative to wage-labour of independent production by individual men or women, or by the family group. It is not usually realised that this still (1935) furnishes some sort of maintenance to as many as fifteen millions of adult men and women in the USSR. There are in the cities innumerable dressmakers and washer-women ; droschky drivers and shoeblacks ; casual "handymen" of all kinds ; "free-lance" journalists and authors, unsalaried artists and scientists. In the vast rural districts between the Baltic and the Pacific the independent peasants still number half a dozen million households, comprising perhaps twelve million adults, to say nothing of the independent fishermen, the hunters, the "prospectors" of minerals and what not, together with the nomads passing from one grazing ground to another. Those who regard work under a contract of service as necessarily of the nature of "wage slavery" may possibly imagine these fifteen million wholly independent producers under Soviet Communism as enjoying complete control over their own working lives ! But, however attractive such complete control may be to some natures, and at some periods of their lives, and however remunerative may be such independent production

¹ In a subsequent chapter on "The Liquidation of the Landlord and Capitalist", we shall describe how, immediately after the revolution of October 1917, most of the factories in Petrograd passed under the management of workers' committees ; and how, in a very short time, this was found to be an unsatisfactory form of organisation.

in exceptional cases, it is the common experience of mankind that it is not in such an isolated existence that the widest freedom is found. Work in combination with others nearly always makes a larger product, and therefore affords a greater width of opportunity, than isolated effort. The question is in which form of associated work does the worker obtain the most control over his working life.

It seems to us clear that, in the great industrial establishments that have for half a century been characteristic of Russian industry, the eighteen millions of trade unionists, whilst not actually entrusted with the management of their several industries, do control, to a very large extent, in their constant consultation with the management, and with all the organs of government, the conditions of their employment—their hours of labour, the exercise of factory discipline, the safety and amenity of their places of work, and the sharing among themselves of the proportion of the product that they agree should be allocated to personal wages. In like manner, the trade unions not only control, and actually manage by their own committees, the disposition of that other part of the product which they agree should be allocated to the whole range of social insurances, education, medical attendance, holidays, and organised recreation of all kinds. Only, this “workers’ control” is exercised, not by any worker as an individual, but jointly by the workers’ committees; and, very largely, not for one establishment by itself, but for each industry as a whole; and, in some cases, where this seems most appropriate, for the whole body of producers in the USSR. The influence, upon every organ of government, of the eighteen million trade unionists, is immeasurably great. It is, in fact, this which is acclaimed as the Dictatorship of the Proletariat! ¹

Compared with the amount of control exercised by those workers who are enrolled in trade unions, that enjoyed by the different kinds of owner-producers is at once much less and much greater. It is much less at long range, and over a wide area. It is much greater over the particular farm or fishery, factory or workshop, in which the associated owner-producers work. It is not the thirty million men and women members of the kolkhosi or the three million members of the incops, or the 300,000 associated fishermen, who dominate the counsels of the USSR Sovnarkom or the Central Committee of the Communist Party, or carry weight with the State Planning Commission, but much more the smaller number of the trade unionists, whether factory workers, miners, railwaymen or labourers in the sovkhosi. But the superiority in control that the worker in the great industry enjoys over the larger area carries with it a lesser control within each particular workshop. Here the worker who is actually a partner with his fellows in the ownership and management of the little enterprise that is run as an industrial cooperative society may well feel that he enjoys a larger liberty to indulge his own caprices than the worker

¹ With what accuracy this claim is made, and subject to what other influences, we examine in Chapter VI. of Part I., “Dictatorship or Democracy?”

who has to obey the factory bell. In the Soviet Union the worker has an effective freedom to choose which form of associated labour he prefers. For nothing stands out more clearly from our survey of the World of Labour in the USSR than the inaccuracy of the assumption that Soviet Communism involves either universal state ownership of the instruments of production, or the existence of but one possible employer of labour, or of only one method of gaining a livelihood.

CHAPTER IV

MAN AS A CONSUMER

WE have seen how the inhabitants of the USSR are represented, in their capacity of citizens, in the soviet hierarchy. We have noted also that they are separately represented in their capacity of producers in three different ways. If they are wage or salary earners they are in the hierarchy of trade unionism. If they are not engaged at salary or wages, they are in one or other of the twin organisations of owner-producers, working respectively in manufacturing artels or incops and in collective farms. But, in all but the simplest societies, mankind has also a third capacity, in which wishes and ideas need a vehicle of expression, and individual activities a mechanism of collective control. As consumers, men and women think and act differently from what they do either as citizens or as producers. Moreover, in all but the smallest communities, to organise, with exact regularity, a daily distribution, among the whole body of consumers, of the innumerable commodities they desire, is a task of immense magnitude and difficulty, calling for its own distinct administration. Before assuming power, Lenin saw clearly and confidently that this task would have to be undertaken by the consumers' cooperative societies, with a membership becoming universal.¹ We may doubt whether he, or anyone else, realised that, in the circumstances of the USSR, the organisation of distribution would prove at least as difficult as the organisation of production; and that it would actually take longer to raise to any common standard of efficiency.

¹ There is an extensive literature in Russian relating to the consumers' cooperative movement, whilst elaborate statistical and other reports are issued, chiefly by Centrosoyus. The following books in other languages may be more conveniently consulted: *The Cooperative Movement in Russia*, by V. V. Bubnov (Manchester, 1917); *The Russian Cooperative Movement*, by F. E. Lee (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1920); *The Cooperative Movement in Russia*, by Elsie Terry Blanc (New York, 1924); *Village Life under the Soviets*, by Karl Borders (New York, 1927); *Die Konsumgenossenschaften in der USSR* (Berlin, 1927, 72 pp.), translated as *Consumers' Cooperation in the USSR* (Manchester, 1927) by N. Popov (director of the Education Department of Centrosoyus); *Soviet Russia in the Second Decade*, New York, 1928, ch. xi. "The Consumers' Cooperative Movement", by Paul Douglas, pp. 253-267; *Die Konsumgenossenschaften in Russland*, by S. Sapir, Berlin, 1928, 260 pp.; *The Cooperative Movement and Banking in the USSR*, by N. Barou (1928, 48 pp.); *The Cooperative Movement in the USSR and its Foreign Trade*, by N. Barou (1929, 30 pp.); *The Cooperative Movement in Russia during the War: Part I. — Consumers' Cooperation*, by Kayden (Oxford, 1929); *Consumers' Cooperation in Soviet Russia*, by E. F. Wise (Manchester, 1929); *The Consumers' Cooperative Movement in the Soviet Union*, by N. Nekrassov (Centrosoyus, Moscow, 1929); *Russian Cooperation Abroad: Foreign Trade 1912-1928*, by N. Barou (1930, 96 pp.); *Les Coopératives de consommation en l'URSS*, par A. E. Badeieff (Amiens, 1930); *Russian Cooperative Banking*, by N. Barou (1931, 82 pp.); *Cooperative Banking*, by N. Barou (1932, 350 pp.); *Russia: USSR*, edited by P. Malevsky-Malevich, New York, 1933, "Cooperation" pp. 572-83; and for the present position, *Cooperation in the USSR*, by Leslie A. Paul (1934, 160 pp.); and *Supply and Trade in the USSR*, by W. Nodel (1934, 176 pp.).

Let us consider, at the outset, some of the troubles that, in any country whatsoever, beset the organiser of a systematic distribution of foodstuffs and other household commodities. There is, first, the difficulty of getting an honest and efficient personnel. This matters far more in distribution than in production. The factory operative may contrive to be idle spasmodically, but this can be largely prevented. What is more to the point is that the materials and products that he handles are seldom such as to tempt him to purloin them for his own or his family's consumption. To the salesman or warehouseman in a cooperative store, on the other hand, or to the lorry driver or porter, at a time when food is scarce and his children at home are hungry, the provocation, if he happens to be pecuniarily distressed, to abstract something to take home is well-nigh irresistible. The temptation is increased by the practical difficulty of ensuring, in a vast number of separate stores, a demonstrably accurate audit of anything except money or stamps. Many kinds of goods in bulk cannot easily be checked on delivery from hand to hand, either by counting or by weighing; whilst stocktaking is a process demanding for accuracy the highest skill and the utmost technical knowledge. Moreover, there must be an allowance for "waste" in retailing, and even in storing; and no one can say with confidence how much. And nearly all commodities depreciate and spoil, to an extent that cannot easily be either checked or estimated. The vagueness in the ascertainment of how much there is produces a laxness in the disposing of it. Even the elected committeemen and the higher officials of the cooperative movement, just because they are always handling relatively large quantities of food and drink, are found—we think, in all countries—to be more disposed to treat themselves lavishly "out of the stores", than are the corresponding committeemen and officials of the trade union movement.

Efficiency behind the counter involves, however, much more than honesty and precise accounting. The productive efficiency of the handicraftsman or factory operative is practically not lessened by occasional bad manners, nor even by habitual incivility or boorishness. For all that matters, these wage-earners can usually be stimulated to zeal and celerity, and continuity of effort throughout the whole working day, by systems of piecework remuneration. But the salesman behind the counter, like the cashier at the pay-desk, is required, all day long, whatever may be his own feelings, to manifest, to one customer after another, unfailing civility of manners and actual zeal in trying to suit the customer's desires, without a trace of resentment of the customer's stupidity or capricious changes of mind. When we cut adrift from the profit-making motive, this efficiency of service in the store cannot easily be pecuniarily stimulated or rewarded. Piece-work rates of wages are often impracticable; and even the system of more or less arbitrary bonuses for good conduct or smart salesmanship usually fails to effect any considerable improvement.

And there is a further trouble in organising distribution that is not always borne in mind. The man who actually makes cabinets or boots,

or who joins with others in constructing a house or a colossal hydroelectric plant, may find joy in his work and pride in his production. But it is not easy for the most virtuous of salesmen to get up any enthusiasm for the dally service of handing out, to an indiscriminate crowd of purchasers, bread and potatoes, cabbages and groceries. It is not for nothing that retail shopkeepers have everywhere been despised by other vocations. In Russia, even more than in other countries, the little trader, often a Tartar or a Jew, or the village usurer or vodka seller, has long lived in an atmosphere of contempt, manifested alike by the handicraftsman and the factory operative, the merchant and the brainworking professional. The result has been a repugnance among the Russians to take to retail shopkeeping, which has not been wholly removed by its transformation into a public service. It has been noticed that relatively few active socialists, and especially few members of the Communist Party, have been at any time salesmen or clerks under the committees of the consumers' cooperative societies.¹ All these considerations, which apply even more to the Russian people than to some others, make the construction of a satisfactory system of distribution perhaps the most difficult of all the tasks to which Soviet Communism has set its hand.

Unfortunately, the previous history of the Russian consumers' cooperative movement and the position in which it stood in 1917 were not such as to facilitate its accomplishment of the task that Lenin had, in thought, assigned to it. Consumers' cooperation had been introduced into Russia from England and Germany half a century before, but only in the way of paternal philanthropy by exceptional employers, and in a form which may not have remained entirely free from the evils of the truck system. Consumers' cooperation as a democratic outcome of independent workmen's organisation may be said to have begun sporadically in Russia with the twentieth century, and to have made headway only with the revolutionary movement of 1905. As an independent organ of working-class opinion, it only barely survived the tsarist repression of the subsequent years; but the movement continued to grow, in city and country, under watchful police supervision, as a non-political outcome of enlightened "liberalism", making for individual thrift. During the three years of war (1914-1917), the consumers' cooperative societies in many cases rendered great service, in association with the patriotic efforts of the Zemstvos, in maintaining the supply of necessities both for the army in the field and for the civilian families at home. When the 1917 revolution occurred, the consumers' cooperative movement, which counted a quarter of the families in Russia in its membership, was almost wholly under the influence of anti-Bolshevik leadership. At any rate, the hundred or more representatives whom the movement sent to the Democratic

¹ "The best Bolsheviks," we have been told, "despite a Party resolution urging a change in spirit, have disdained to work in the cooperative stores, manifesting a certain superior, one might almost say aristocratic attitude towards the business of selling, buying and merchandising."

Conference (or "Pre-Parliament") summoned by Kerensky's government in September 1917, ranged themselves "unanimously with the Kadets and Compromisers".¹ Especially in the Ukraine had the cooperative movement an invidious intellectual heritage. At Kiev, and generally in the Ukrainian cities, the movement was frankly nationalist in spirit, desiring no connection with Moscow. In 1917 it supported the Menshevik uprising in the Ukraine and backed up Kerensky. In the following years it sided with Petlura, and supported Denikin and the counter-revolutionary efforts. Not until the population of the Ukraine had become disgusted with the reactionary character and the excesses of Denikin's army were there any overtures to Moscow. The leading cooperators of the Ukraine had, however, by this time so clearly indicated their intellectual position that they were naturally distrusted.

When the Bolshevik Government was firmly in the saddle, the cooperative societies went on struggling with the increasing difficulties of supplies; and Lenin's administration, whilst noting their manifest lack of sympathy with its programme, took no immediate action against them. Presently, however, in the welter of war communism, the whole organisation of these societies was absorbed into the government machinery, their buildings and local organisation being autocratically utilised for the distribution of the state rations. This, however, was not the end. There is reason to believe that Lenin remained faithful to his conception of a voluntary organisation of consumers—a hierarchy of consumers' cooperative committees—as an essential part of the constitution, undertaking the whole distribution of household commodities. With the acceptance of the New Economic Policy (NEP), came the restoration to independence of the consumers' cooperative societies. These were placed anew on a legal basis by the legislation of 1923-1924. On this revival of the voluntary societies, steps were taken to exclude from the leadership of the movement, as far as possible, those who had been prominent in it prior to 1919 and to bring to the front the Bolshevik members. The "activists" of the Communist Party nearly everywhere saw to it in the cities that the elections brought about the necessary preponderance of "well-disposed" cooperators on the committees, and the Central Board of *Centrosoyus* has ever since been in complete accord with the "General Line".

In spite of all these inherent difficulties and temporary defects, the cooperative membership and turnover have, throughout the past decade,

¹ "Having up to this time (1927) occupied no place in politics, the cooperators . . . began to appear as the representatives of their 20 million members—or, to put it more simply, of some half the population of Russia. The cooperators sent their roots down into the village through its upper strata. . . . The leaders of the cooperators were recruited from the Liberal-Narodnik and partly the Liberal-Marxist intelligentsia, who formed a natural bridge between the Kadets and the Compromisers. . . . Lenin mercilessly denounced these 'chefs of the democratic kitchen'. . . . Trotsky argued in the Petrograd Soviet that the officials of the cooperatives as little expressed the political will of the peasants as a physician the political will of his patients or a Post Office clerk the views of those who send and receive letters" (*The History of the Russian Revolution*, by Leon Trotsky, vol. ii. (1933), pp. 331-332, 337; vol. iii. pp. 17-18, 31, 67).

increased by leaps and bounds, because no family could wish permanently to forgo the advantage of belonging to a cooperative society. It became unnecessary to retain such attractions to recruiting as the dividend on purchases, and even the payment of interest on share capital.¹ The continuance of rationing, and the increasing limitation of purchases by the use of cards, issued to the producers as such, made it almost necessary for every member of the family over fourteen years of age to be separately enrolled in order to be eligible to share in the distribution of the commodities from time to time in short supply.² The result has been that, although membership of a consumers' cooperative society has remained legally quite optional, its practical advantages have made it—leaving out of account the “deprived” categories on the one hand, and the nomadic races and some still savage tribes on the other—almost coterminous with the adult population of the USSR. Unfortunately, as we shall relate, this astonishing increase in membership and turnover has sorely tried the capacity of the movement. Year after year the leaders and committees have been incessantly struggling to keep pace with the rapid multiplication of their customers, and at the same time to make good one defect after another that experience has revealed in the organisation. But we must first describe that organisation as it exists to-day.³

The Hierarchy of Consumers' Cooperation in the USSR in 1935

The aggregate membership of consumers' cooperative societies in the USSR at the end of 1934 is stated as seventy-three millions, enrolled in 45,000 local or primary societies, which now extend to every part of this vast area. These societies are of three main types: namely, (1) the village store, which is by far the most numerous; (2) the city society with a shareholding membership open to all comers (except such as may be individually excluded as belonging to the “deprived categories”); and (3)—a speciality of the USSR—the vocational society or “closed cooperative”, in which membership is restricted to the persons employed,

¹ Any surplus is devoted, not to interest or dividend, but to some public object of use to the membership. But surpluses are not encouraged. Prices ought to be kept as low as possible.

² By a decision of Centrosoyus the normal profit of a village cooperative shop is limited to from 1½ to 2 per cent” (*Supply and Trade in the USSR*, by W. Nodel, 1934, pp. 98-99).

³ We are informed that not all societies admitted members under eighteen, though many accepted them at fourteen, without power to vote until they reached the age of eighteen.

⁴ We take the following statistics from a detailed publication of Centrosoyus (in Russian) entitled *The Consumers' Cooperative Societies in 1929-1933* (Moscow, 1934, 215 pp.). Excluding the closed societies now transferred to the factory managements (ORS), the number of societies rose, in the cities, from 1403 in 1929 to 3782 on October 1, 1933; and in the villages from 25,757 in 1929 to 40,920 on October 1, 1933. The number of their trading units rose in the cities from 31,512 to 44,811; and in the villages to 122,632. The total sales in the cities rose from 5984 million roubles to 10,663 million roubles; and in the villages from 3925 to 7814 million roubles—the aggregate total being nearly doubled.

either in a particular establishment or in a particular vocation.¹

A majority of all the cooperative members are to be found in the 41,000 relatively small village societies in the rural areas, and these, whilst adding branches in the neighbouring hamlets (averaging three per society), remain mostly of the simplest type. These are united in 2355 rayon Unions. These again, along with the 4000 city societies, having over 40,000 branches, are united in 32 provincial Unions for the six smaller constituent republics and the 26 divisions of the RSFSR. From the councils of these 32 provincial Unions are drawn the representatives who constitute the Central Board of the Central Union of the USSR and RSFSR (Centrosoyus).

The Members' Meeting

At the base of the cooperative pyramid is the open meeting of all the members over eighteen of each of the local or primary societies. These meetings, which are held as desired, usually every two or three months throughout the year, are reported to be well attended, even to the extent of 50 or even 75 per cent of the total membership,² women being almost as numerous as men. The officers and committeemen of the society

¹ At all times during the present century the workers employed in each of the gigantic establishments characteristic of modern Russian industry have tended to establish their own consumers' cooperative society, originating exclusively among their colleagues in work, and remaining practically confined to them. With the relatively large turnover among these workers, such societies came increasingly to include in their membership many who had left the establishment and were working elsewhere. In 1930, largely owing to the difficulty of obtaining sufficient supplies, a demand arose for making these societies definitely closed to any but persons actually in employment at the particular establishment, together with their dependents. This step was rapidly carried out during the next two years, until nearly every large factory had its "closed cooperative". Meanwhile a similar policy had led to societies established exclusively for the members of particular vocations wherever they happened to be working. In 1933 and 1934 about 350 of the largest of these "closed" cooperative societies, comprising nearly three million members, were converted into departments of the factory organisation with which they connected, and thus ceased to be cooperative societies. There still remain, in 1935, about 2300 cooperative societies that have a closed or restricted membership. This restriction of membership is regarded as a purely temporary measure, certainly destined to pass away when supplies become abundant, and at a date not more distant than a couple of years.

² Members are usually admitted at fourteen if desired, but they do not become "active" until eighteen years old. It should, however, be said that the "deprived categories" already described are still statutorily excluded, not only from the soviet franchise but also from cooperative as from trade-union membership. The "open" societies freely sell to non-members any but "deficit commodities" or rationed goods. The share which members are required to take up and pay for, though the amount is always payable by easy instalments, is now usually equal to one month's earnings of the particular candidate. Since 1930 no interest is paid upon shares, any more than "dividend on purchases", but the shares remain nominally withdrawable, and they are easily transferable to another society.

The whole surplus is now specifically devoted, according to the decision of the members' meeting, for various common purposes, such as educational work of different kinds, the provision of a library and reading-rooms, a benevolent fund for members falling into distress or needing help in sickness, and subscriptions to sundry patriotic associations.

In the rural districts the attendance at the members' meetings during the summer may fall to as little as 25 per cent, but rises to over 75 per cent in the winter. It is evidently pressure of work that keeps members away; not severity of weather!

are expected invariably to attend. They report the current business of the society, hear the members' complaints and give explanations. The meetings are reported to be usually very lively, many complaints and suggestions being made. Once a year the members have to elect the president and the members of the committee, and also the society's representatives to the rayon, together with a "control committee" or "revision committee", which has the important duties, not only of stock-taking and audit, but also of general supervision of the society's work. Except in the smallest village societies, it is the duty of the group of members of the Communist Party within the society to prepare a "slate", or list of candidates recommended, not excluding a due representation of outstanding "non-Party" men and women; and then to be active in securing its adoption by the election meeting. But in many of the smaller villages, the members of the Party are not numerous, and may, indeed, often be non-existent, and it is common for the committee to contain a large majority of non-Party members, whilst the president is frequently a Party man or woman.

The Committee of Management

In all the rural societies the whole work of management is carried on by the directly elected committee or board, in consultation with the separately elected control committee or revision committee. The manager, as well as the secretary, is appointed by the committee of management, whilst the subordinate staff of salesmen, porters, drivers, etc., is selected by the manager subject to approval by the committee. It is the committee of management that appoints one or more representatives of the society to the meetings of the rayon Union. Membership of the rayon Union is not obligatory, but is almost universally found to be convenient; and the attitude of the rayon Union council to the local or primary society is one of helpfulness rather than control.

The Rayon Union with the Rayon Council (Raisoyus)

The rayon council, representing all the consumers' cooperative societies that are members of the rayon Union, is elected annually, together with a revision or control committee, by a conference of delegates from these societies, which is attended also by the retiring rayon council. This rayon conference, at which, on an average, about a score of societies are represented by two or three times that number of delegates, is held either once a quarter or once every six months, to hear complaints and discuss the cooperative business of the rayon. The rayon council elects its own president and several other members of a presidium, who, with a separately elected revision committee, jointly constitute its only executive. The rayon council usually elects also the rayon representatives to the next higher authority, the conference of the oblast or republic Union to which the rayon belongs.

The rayon Union councils are now required to become members of the higher stages of the hierarchy, and to act under their instructions in carrying out the tasks prescribed by the General Plan. They also assist in the development and strengthening of another cooperative network, in which, over a large part of the movement, cooperative societies of all types—consumers' societies, manufacturing associations of owner producers (artels or incops) and agricultural associations of owner-producers (collective farms)—voluntarily come together in periodical local conferences to discuss the arrangements, such as those for the supply of commodities, that can be made for their common advantage.

The Oblast or Republic Union with its Council (Oblsoyus)

Each of the six smaller constituent republics (not the RSFSR) gathers together in a republic Union the rayon councils within its area, and, along with each of them, the local or primary cooperative societies of the cities. In the case of the Ukraine (with Moldavia) this Union (Wickopsilka) represents a specially large body of cooperators, comprising over 400 rayons, in which are included some 12,000 local or primary societies, open or closed, for villages or cities or particular factories or industries; having nearly twelve million members. In addition to the six republic Unions, there are similar Unions for the 26 separate divisions of the RSFSR, comprising 8 for its autonomous republics, 10 for its national minorities in other autonomous areas, 6 for its oblasts and 2 for the large cities of Moscow and Leningrad. In all these are included, not only the numerous village societies, but also the consumers' cooperatives in the cities, whether open or closed, including (down to 1932) some 350 of the largest closed societies confined to the workers in particular factories, establishments, industries or vocations. Each of these societies elects its representatives to an oblast conference, which the oblast Union council also attends. This oblast conference is held once or twice a year. It appoints annually the oblast Union council and also the oblast's representatives to the All-Union Cooperative Congress. The oblast council meets every few weeks throughout the year, and appoints annually its president and presidium by whom the work is mainly conducted.

The All-Union Congress of Consumers' Cooperatives, with its Central Board for the USSR and the RSFSR (Centrosoyus)

The whole system culminates in the Central Board of Centrosoyus at Moscow, to which all the consumers' cooperative societies in the USSR are definitely affiliated. Two or three times a year the representatives of the 32 oblast or republic Unions, together with those separately elected for this purpose by the city societies, at the rate of one delegate for each 75,000 membership, meet in conference with the Central Board to discuss the whole course of its business. Periodically, too, the Central Board

summons to a conference the presidents of all the oblast or republic Unions. Every two years the Central Board itself, together with a revision committee (whose business includes auditing), are elected at a specially summoned meeting of a much wider body, the All-Union Congress of Consumers' Cooperatives, comprising the authorised representatives of all the 2355 rayon Unions in the USSR, as well as of the 32 oblast or republic Unions. This congress elects the president of the Central Board, but the presidium of the Central Board is elected by the Central Board itself.

The business of Centrosoyus, combining as it does the functions of the English Cooperative Union with those of the English and Scottish Cooperative Wholesale Societies, and acting for a cooperative membership ten times as numerous as that of the United Kingdom or Germany, dispersed over an area many more times as extensive—is almost unimaginably gigantic and complex. With its extraordinarily rapid growth in membership, amid the obstacles of a constant inadequacy of production, the consumers' cooperative movement in the USSR, taken as a whole, has lived in a perpetual struggle to overcome its difficulties, whilst its structure has been almost continually in a state of readjustment and reorganisation which is never completed.

At present (1935) the work of Centrosoyus is organised as follows. The Board itself, composed of seventy members, must meet at least once a quarter, and in practice it sits about every ten days. Its prolonged sessions are usually attended by some forty members, together with a number of executive heads of departments without votes. Once a year it elects from among its own members a vice-president and ten others to form, with the president, a presidium which acts as an executive committee. These members meet almost daily, and give their whole time to the Board's service. The Board now elects from its own members also a "Committee of Control and Execution" which has its own official staff, and is charged with the duty of seeing that all the numerous decisions of the Board are actually carried out.

The large staff of officials is organised in seven autonomous sections and some forty distinct departments, all working under the close supervision of the presidium of the Central Board and its Committee of Control and Execution, as well as under the eyes of the entirely independent Revision Committee which is elected by and directly responsible to the All-Union Congress. Each of the seven sections specialises on a particular set of workers, as to whom it is deemed of particular importance that their supplies should be without interruption maintained at a high level, so as not to jeopardise the fulfilment of the General Plan. These sections have their several bank credits, and their several stock accounts. They comprise the following:

(a) The Transport Section, which coordinates the work of the railway employees' closed cooperative societies, according to the control figures and instructions supplied by the Central Board. It draws up plans for improving the supply of commodities to the various railway workshops,

depôts, locomotive centres, and particularly to the members of the shock brigades working therein.

(b) The Water Transport Section, which coordinates all the closed cooperative societies which cater for the workers employed in the sea and river transport service, in order to protect their interests as consumers; making provision for cheap and good food for passengers and crews on board ships.

(c) The Fisheries Section, which controls the activities of the closed societies of the fishery workers, and makes itself responsible for satisfactory supplies of food and articles of prime necessity for all workers connected with sea, lake or river fisheries.

(d) The Timber Section, which caters through a network of lumbermen's cooperatives for all workers connected with the timber trade. It sends foodstuffs and manufactured goods to the places where the trees are felled, and seeks to raise the productivity of labour through improved supplies.

(e) The Peat Section, which supplies through the cooperative societies in the peat-producing districts, all the workers employed in this industry, in order to enable them to make the required output.

(f) The Cattle-Breeding and State Farm Section, which organises the work of the consumers' cooperatives in the cattle-breeding and grain state farms, and sees to the carrying out of the price policy.

(g) The Central Army Cooperative Administration, which sees to the network of closed cooperatives wherever the defence forces are stationed.

Apart from this specialised sectional supervision of particular groups of closed cooperatives, the vast Centrosoyus office has the following forty-odd departments, styled "associations", sections, groups or sectors, and each of them enjoying a large measure of autonomy under its own manager, who is directly responsible to the Central Board and its Committee of Control and Execution. The following summary of this extraordinary organisation is of interest as indicating not only the immense size and range of its operations, but also the characteristic way in which it has grown up by the addition of a new department to cope with each new emergency.¹

1. CENTRAL DEPARTMENTS AND GROUPS.

Departments :

- (a) Purchase of stocks of goods.
- (b) Accounting.
- (c) Training of new staff.
- (d) Planning and finances.
- (e) Foreign affairs.
- (f) Cooperative upbuilding and recruiting of new members.

¹ The list of departments, under various designations, is constantly changing, and usually increasing in complexity; see *Cooperation in the USSR*, by Leslie A. Paul, 1934, pp. 70-74.

- (g) Administrative department.
- (h) Secretariat of the Presidium.

Groups :

- (a) Transport.
- (b) Capital constructions.
- (c) Industrial enterprises.
- (d) Recording and distribution of cooperative workers.
- (e) Central arbitration.
- (f) Sanitary service.

2. BOARDS OF TRADE (INDUSTRIAL GOODS).

Departments :

- (a) Textile.
- (b) Ready-made clothing.
- (c) Leather goods.
- (d) Planning.
- (e) Circulation of goods and inter-district bases.
- (f) Inspection.

3. BOARD OF COOPERATIVE RESTAURANTS (VSEKOOPIT).

4. BOARD OF COOPERATIVE BREAD-BAKING.

5. ALL-UNION COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATIONS.

A. Trade :

- (a) Haberdashery.
- (b) Educational goods.
- (c) Handicraft goods.
- (d) Groceries.
- (e) Matches.
- (f) Shop equipment.
- (g) Import Department.
- (h) Parcels Department.
- (i) Sale of non-planned goods.
- (j) Bureau of supply and demand.
- (k) Containers and warehouses.
- (l) Supplies, repairs of cars, etc.

B. Production :

Tea Association.

C. Purchase and storing of goods :

- (a) Fruits and vegetables.
- (b) Milk, dairy products, poultry and eggs.
- (c) Raw goods.
- (d) Purchase of meat.
- (e) Grain and flour.
- (f) Fisheries.

6. AUDITING COMMITTEE.

The Mechanised Bakeries

Perhaps the most outstanding single achievement of the consumers' cooperative organisation in the USSR is the abolition of the primitive and insanitary cellars and hovels in which was baked the bread that forms so large a part of the diet of all the inhabitants. These small hand bakeries, which were universal in all the cities of Europe a century ago, and still persist, to a greater or less extent, in all countries except the USSR, have been replaced in nearly all the cities of European Russia by large, new and completely mechanised plants. Those in Moscow and Leningrad are not only the largest in the world, but also the most magnificent in their equipment and arrangements, exciting the unstinted admiration of those who are acquainted with the best that other countries can show. They are also, what is not always the case in the USSR or elsewhere, both economically and financially successful; reducing the cost of production to such an extent as to permit not only of increases of wages and reductions of hours to all the workers employed, and successive reductions in the price to the consumer, but also the reimbursement of the whole capital outlay within less than five years.¹

The first partly mechanised bakery was hastily established under the stress of war by the St. Petersburg Municipal Council in 1915. This was successively enlarged and improved by the Bolshevik Government, but not for a whole decade was it found possible to decide to supersede the hand bakeries. Meanwhile they were in Moscow and Leningrad gradually concentrated by amalgamations and extensions into half their former number. In about a score of cases partial mechanisation was effected, sometimes in new buildings. In March 1925 the Council of Labour and Defence (STO) adopted, in principle, the plan of complete supersession by newly erected and entirely mechanised establishments. Leading administrators, accompanied by engineers, were sent to the principal cities in Western Europe and the United States to inspect the latest achievements in bakery equipment, and to purchase all the necessary machinery, none of which was at that time produced in the USSR. During the years 1926-1929 the first three completely mechanised bakeries were constructed in Leningrad and Moscow. Meanwhile considerable improvements were invented by the Soviet engineer Marsakov, notably in the conveyer system, which enabled much more labour to be dispensed with than in even the most advanced American, Dutch or British bakeries. The whole of the machinery was then constructed in the soviet machine-making establishments. By the end of 1932 there were at work in the principal cities of the USSR more than 300 more or less mechanised bakeries of large size (including eleven claiming to be "entirely auto-

¹ The best account of these bakeries is that by their chief administrator in Moscow, who was awarded the Order of Lenin (*Mechanised Baking in Moscow*, by A. Badayev, with a foreword by I. Dobrynin, Cooperative Publishing Society of Foreign Workers, Moscow, 1934, 84 pp.). See also *Supply and Trade in the USSR*, by W. Nodel, 1934, pp. 145-152.

matic ~), turning out daily over 15,000 tons of bread of several varieties. Moscow and Leningrad, with a combined population exceeding six millions, are now (1935) wholly supplied by a score of gigantic completely mechanised bakeries, which are palaces of scientific sanitation, in which the workers enjoy not only the seven-hours day and regular holidays on full pay but also all sorts of amenities. Not only the industry but also the conditions of labour have been revolutionised to such an extent as to render almost incredible the descriptions in the English Parliamentary Papers of a century ago, and what Maxim Gorky himself experienced half a century ago. This has been one of the most successful achievements of the soviet administrators, in which L. M. Kaganovich played a large part; and which stands to the credit of the Leningrad and Moscow Cooperative Unions, as well as to that of the members of the Board of Cooperative Breadmaking of Centrosoyus, by whom the whole network of mechanised bakeries is directed.

Cooperative Education

Special mention must be made of the extensive network of educational organisations maintained by the consumers' cooperative movement. Whilst elementary education is left to the schools everywhere maintained by the soviets, the cooperators apply themselves to providing the additional education required by an active cooperator, and still more by every committeeman and employee in the service of the movement. There are, accordingly, a whole array of vocational classes, and even schools, devoted to subjects which every cooperator ought to know. These were reported, in 1933, to have some 60,000 pupils. In every oblast there is at least one cooperative "technicum" (institute of secondary grade) under the supervision of the cooperative Union of the oblast. These cooperative technicums have now something like 10,000 students. At Moscow there is a cooperative academy, and at Leningrad a cooperative institute, both of them claiming university rank, and restricted, by entrance examinations, to students over 18 qualified to enter on advanced studies. Each oblast or rayon in the USSR has the privilege of nominating its quota of students to these cooperative universities, paying for them in fees covering all the instruction, and in stipends meeting the cost of maintenance of each student. From the graduates of these two institutions are drawn an increasing proportion of the principal officers of Centrosoyus, and the managers of many of the more important primary societies. The system of cooperative education in the USSR is by far the most extensive in the world.¹

The Results Achieved

The cooperators of the USSR pride themselves, not without warrant, on the marvellous growth of their movement, in turnover as well as in membership, and in the range and variety of the commodities supplied, now comprising at least 70 per cent of the total retail trade within the

¹ See *Cooperation in the USSR*, by Leslie A. Paul, 1934, pp. 113-131.

Union. There seems to be scarcely a centre of population west of the Urals, and none of any magnitude in Siberia or Transcaucasia, which is not served by a local consumers' cooperative society, usually covering several villages and hamlets. Every year the membership, the trade turnover, the capital employed, and the numbers of separate buildings or other "selling points" and of the persons engaged in the work, goes on increasing, apparently without check. The range and variety of the commodities supplied, at any rate by Centrosoyus, and in the central stores of the city societies, has steadily increased, and many of the local or primary societies, especially in the cities, have taken increasing advantage of this widening of the range of supplies.

Thus the large Leningrad City society, which has some 400 branch shops for its 980,000 members, opened in 1933 a magnificent central store, stocked with 25,000 different commodities, the contents alone being insured against fire for 25 million roubles; including, for instance, a score of different penknives, and forty different varieties of boots and shoes, in a dozen different sizes. Nor is this provision of variety in any way unique. The children's toy department in a central Moscow store was found, in 1934, to have 400 kinds of toys in stock, and was severely rebuked for having so limited a variety! The stock was immediately increased to 1500 kinds of toys, and in 1935 it is to have 2000. Already in 1932 various cooperative societies in the cities were advertising their willingness to supply clothing made to measure and specially fitted to each customer's figure. This refinement will be facilitated by the promised establishment of a separate department of the government clothing factories, which is to specialise in "bespoke tailoring", and expects to employ a staff of 1500 expert cutters and fitters and coatmakers, to execute individual orders upon the measurements taken by the local societies. In all sorts of ways the convenience of the customer is being increasingly studied. Thus, it could be authoritatively claimed in 1934 that "delivery of goods to the home has been developed on a large scale in recent years. In Leningrad over 200,000 persons have their orders delivered to their homes; in Moscow there is a similar number; at Dneprostroi 16,000 families (or 50,000 persons) have theirs delivered; at Kuznetskstoi 16,000 persons, and so on. Delivery orders are executed by special warehouses or branches of the big retail shops. . . . The system of subscription books for the purchase of staple commodities such as bread, milk, vegetables, etc., has lately become quite popular. . . . In Leningrad, since the beginning of 1933, nearly half the bread has been sold on monthly subscription books purchased at the beginning of each month. The subscription book covers the quantity . . . required for the month; its use eliminates daily cash purchases, and speeds up the sale of the bread to each customer."¹ Meanwhile, in various cities, "vigorous

¹ *Supply and Trade in the USSR*, by W. Nodel, 1934, pp. 51-52. The numbers stated for Leningrad and Moscow seem exaggerated. The difficulty of obtaining sufficient motor-lorries has stood in the way of extending this service.

efforts have been made, in recent years, to establish so-called house-shops in the big workers' apartment houses. The house-shops aim at organising the supply of food products and other necessities to the tenants of the house. These shops, as a rule, are open only a few hours a day, and the tenants themselves help in the work (the salesmen generally work only part of their time in the shop and are elected from among the tenants of the house)."¹

This multiplication of retailing points and increasing attention to the customers' varying demands has gone hand in hand with concentration of mass production in a smaller number of gigantic factories. Thus, as we have mentioned, the making of bread in nearly all large cities, and also throughout the Donbas coal-mining area, has been practically monopolised by highly mechanised cooperative bakeries on a gigantic scale. From these huge bread factories a fleet of motor-lorries deliver several varieties of bread several times a day to hundreds of bread shops in each large city. The concentration of production permits of the most systematic and prompt distribution of the staple article of Russian diet, through a vast network of selling points, which, in Moscow and Leningrad, reaches the high figure of one in the midst of each 400 families.

Another extension of the past few years has been the development of communal feeding, by the provision of cooperative dining establishments, supplying plain meals at low prices. This has gone very far. Not only does every factory, every large office, and every educational institution, from the elementary school to the university college, provide meals for its own people, on its own premises, but there are also large public dining-halls open to all comers. The work is too great to be undertaken under a single direction. "Communal feeding", we are told, "is carried on by two organisations; Soyusnarpit, a special trust subordinated to the People's Commissariat of Supply, and Vsekopit, a trust subordinated to the Centrosoyus. Soyusnarpit controls communal feeding establishments in Moscow, Leningrad, Donbas, Kharkov and the Urals. In all other cities, and in villages, communal feeding is organised by Vsekopit . . . [through] the cooperatives operating in the given factory, town or village."²

There has been a corresponding development of cooperative supplies in the villages, but less generally in operation. Village cooperative societies are sharing in the wider range of supplies offered by Centrosoyus. In many cases the village has organised its own communal feeding arrangements, either through the collective farms or through the village cooperative society. Usually they work together. "The aim of a village cooperative society in the USSR", it has been said, "is not merely to sell goods, but to sell them in a way which will strengthen the collective farm; help to complete the sowing, harvesting, threshing as speedily as possible; help to carry out all agricultural operations in the best manner. That is

¹ *Supply and Trade in the USSR*, by W. Nodel, 1934, p. 51.

² *Ibid.* pp. 140-141.

why, in the spring, all cooperatives carried part of their work into the field; that is why, during reaping and threshing, tens of thousands of stalls are opened in the fields, so that the collective farmer does not have to go to the village for goods, but can get them on the spot where he is working.”¹

Enterprise of this kind is, however, not universal. Some of the village committees of management, and their managers, are still content to obtain only the commonest kinds of customary necessities, ignoring the steadily widening of range of available supplies and not giving scope for their members' new wants. The oblast cooperative councils are accordingly now trying to “educate the demand”. Experimental shops are being opened by these councils in local centres of population, in which goods of better quality, and in greater variety, are exposed for sale, for the purpose of bringing to the notice of committeemen, managers and members alike how greatly the range of cooperative supplies has increased. The increasing prosperity of the peasantry, in tens of thousands of collective farms, is (1935) leading to novel demands for wireless sets, gramophones, books, bicycles, watches, fur coats, leather jackets, and especially leather boots and shoes, in kinds and qualities heretofore outside the experience of the manager of a village cooperative society. It is a sign, not necessarily of any worsening of the service, but, more frequently, of an awakening of new desires and of a consciousness of higher standards, that the members continue to grumble at the shortcomings of the distributing organisation that they themselves control.

The popular dissatisfaction with the cooperative societies has arisen in the past very largely from the inadequacy of the supplies to meet the constantly growing demands of the consumers. The severe rationing of this or that foodstuff; the limitation on the amount of this or that commodity that may be supplied by the society to any one member within each year; even the total failure, at this point or that, of the supply of certain commodities—all this has been plainly not so much the fault of the consumers' cooperative movement as one of the shortcomings of the organisation for production, caused, in the main, not by any falling off in the supply either of food or of household commodities, which, in the aggregate, goes on steadily increasing year after year, but by the enormous growth in the effective demand, with which it is almost impossible to keep pace. The popular complaints have, however, this amount of justification, that the Central Board has never yet wholly succeeded in preventing unnecessary delays and stoppages in the transmission of supplies from farm or factory to the store counter. There have been not a few occasions when village and even city stores have been clamouring in vain for particular supplies, when these have been lying unopened, and even forgotten, at some intermediate point. More usually the manager and even the committeemen of the village store are found to be sunk in a routine of repeating their old orders, strictly limited in range to a few commodities

¹ *Supply and Trade in the USSR*, by W. Nodel, 1934, p. 100.

that they know will go off quickly, rather than seek to fulfil their customers' unexpressed yearning for a wider choice. Whatever inspection the Central Board maintains over the working of the 41,000 village stores, this has apparently not yet succeeded in stirring to a livelier imagination the minds of those who ought to be on the alert to satisfy the customers' desires.

In the cities much of the complaints have, in the past, related to the queues, and the frightful amount of time that shopping requires. This is not due so much to the inadequacy of supplies—which the consumers' cooperative movement cannot completely amend—as to the working of the whole distributive apparatus of the Soviet Union; and particularly the primitive cooperative arrangements for selling, which have been in constant course of improvement, but at a rate never quite keeping pace with the growth of population. In the large cities, there have hitherto been not enough shops. Inside the shops there is, even now, not enough length of selling counter; indeed, at times, not even enough standing room for the customers. There are often not enough salesmen and cashiers to avoid the formation of queues within the shops; and, on the commodities, not enough legible price-tickets visible to the customers, so as to enable them promptly to make up their minds.¹

Behind all the complaints to which the shortcomings of the consumers' cooperative movement have, from time to time, given rise, there is a popular suspicion that the movement has not yet been able wholly to rid itself of elements out of sympathy with the Communist Party, and that such unfriendly influences may even intentionally lessen efficiency at all points.² Until a few years ago, the movement certainly retained on the

¹ It is to this inadequate selling accommodation and staffing, which is constant and ubiquitous, rather than to the merely local and periodical short supply of particular commodities, that is to be attributed the characteristic feature of Soviet shopping, namely, the queue, with its invariable accompaniment of extraordinarily slow service at the counter and at the pay desk. It is not usually any short supply of commodities that causes a queue, but the failure to dispose of each customer's shopping as quickly as additional customers arrive. Where any such delay occurs, a queue will inevitably be formed, even if supply is more than adequate to the whole demand, or (as in the sale of postage stamps, at the principal post office) even unlimited. The queue phenomenon is not confined to Soviet Russia, but may be witnessed at any British railway station when numerous passengers arrive nearly simultaneously at the window of one ticket-issuing clerk. As soon as additional windows are opened, enabling additional clerks to issue tickets, proportionately to the gathering crowd, the queue quickly disappears, quite irrespective of the adequacy of the supply of tickets.

It should be added that, in the USSR in 1934, queues had become rare, even in the largest cities; and had come to be most obvious at the railway ticket offices, the post offices, and some of the public dining-halls, in none of which were they due to any shortage of supply.

² In a few cases members of the Communist Party or of the League of Youth (Comsomols) have taken complete charge of a consumers' society, by request of the members. These have sometimes been run as model stores. Thus we learn that "Cooperative store No. 41 of the October district, Moscow, staffed entirely by Comsomols, is known as the best shop in the district, thanks mainly to the efforts of Boris Levit, Comsomol manager. With a previous record of embezzlements, queues and underweighing, for the ten months that the Comsomols have been in charge of the store there has not been a single complaint.

"Levit himself does not wait for goods to be brought to the store—he goes out to get them. There had been no cigarettes—Levit went direct to the tobacco trust and saw

staff an unusually high proportion of persons disaffected towards the communist régime. In 1930 it was found that Centrosoyus was employing no fewer than "136 former Mensheviks, members of the Bund, Social Revolutionaries, Kadets (constitutional democrats), Popular Socialists, anarchists and others; 11 ministers of former governments; 109 former merchants; 82 ex-officers, of whom 34 served in the White Army. . . . Those figures were obtained only during the special purge that was carried out in 1930."¹ The total personnel employed by the movement now reaches one million; and it has so far proved impossible to enrol anything like that number of trained and zealous, honest and industrious salesmen, cashiers and accountants. "The cooperative personnel", it has been said, "has been distinctly inferior; bureaucrats on top; slow, indifferent and rude employees on the bottom. . . . There have been more speculators, embezzlers, thieves and bureaucrats in the cooperative system than in any other branch of soviet enterprise." Nor are there available in the USSR the 40,000 or 50,000 competent store managers that are requisite. In the four-fifths of the cooperative societies that operate in the villages, it is still usual for the committees of management to fill all the salaried posts from among the village residents, very largely from members of the committeemen's own families.² It is against much local opposition that

to it that the store was supplied with cigarettes. He did the same regarding fruit. When food of poor quality is sent in, this Comsomol shop does not pass it on to the consumer but sends it back with complaints.

"The 3300 consumers attached to this shop—no small number to cater to—are workers employed in two printshops. The Comsomol store keeps in touch with the workers, informing them when new assortments are received, and arranges that the stuff be sold immediately after work-hours. Levit himself has made reports in departments of the printshop and has succeeded in fulfilling demands and doing away with defects that were pointed out.

"Salesmen of the vegetable department were awarded premiums amounting to 40 per cent of their wages during August and September for good work. All vegetables were carefully handled, the winter supply of potatoes was quickly and carefully unloaded. Not only did the Comsomols stop after work hours to see that the vegetables were properly unloaded, but they attended subotniks in other warehouses. This store is spotless. Each salesman takes turn in superintending the cleaning. Accounts are in perfect order. Each worker has passed the technical norm examination, and all are active in social and political work" (*Moscow Daily News*, October 3, 1933).

There are, we fear, very few cooperative societies of which such an enthusiastic report could be made, even by their warmest admirers.

¹ *Fifteen Years' Soviet Building* (in Russian), 1932, p. 256.

² Drastic measures are being taken to raise the standard of these cooperative employees. Thus it was reported in June 1933 that "About 100,000 workers employed in 6500 stores of the consumers' cooperative system have recently undergone an examination by special committees set up to decide their fitness for work in cooperatives. Over 12,000 of them have been found unfit and will be dismissed.

"In some regions the percentage of misfits was found to be extremely high. In the Odessa Province 57.7 per cent of the cooperative workers were disqualified by the examination committees; in Baku 38 per cent of the workers were dismissed; in Northern Ossetia 21 per cent.

"The cleaning was accompanied in many cities by special meetings called in the factories and offices to discuss the work of the cooperative stores. Here the store committees reported on their work and in a number of cases the complaint books were read to ascertain the quality of the service rendered by the cooperative workers" (*Moscow Daily News*, June 15, 1933).

the Central Board strives continually to improve the training, and even the manners, of the huge staff of the movement. For the higher positions of greater responsibility than salesmen, for whom, as we have mentioned, an elaborate scheme of cooperative education exists, reliance has still to be placed, to a great extent, upon men and women qualified only by their long experience in the movement, some of whom have only reluctantly accepted the Bolshevik régime, and are only very doubtfully in sympathy with the policy embodied in the successive Five-Year Plans.¹ There is accordingly ample explanation of the inability of the consumers' cooperative movement to undertake, at present, the whole vast service of distribution of commodities.

The Rivals of the Consumers' Cooperative in Retail Distribution

The task of the consumers' cooperative movement in the USSR has not been made easier by the fact that a whole series of encroachments upon what might have been considered its sphere have been made. In 1930 the USSR Commissariat of Trade was reorganised into a Commissariat of Supplies, with a view to the more systematic regulation of the whole internal trade within the USSR, whether wholesale or retail (as distinguished from production, which was, at that date, left to the control of the Supreme Economic Council). Primarily, it seems, the duties of the People's Commissar of Supplies were to be concentrated on the distribution of foodstuffs (including sugar) from the farm or the factory right down to the consumer, who was to be increasingly served in the cities by a system of food factories, mechanised kitchens and public dining-halls. Six great combines were at once established as independent financial entities, but under the direct superintendence of the People's

¹ It is certainly widely believed in the USSR that "ever since the beginning of the revolution, the enemies of the soviets have given a great deal of their attention to the food supplies, that is, to the most vulnerable spot in the soviet organisation, attacking it on two fronts—on the production front in the kolkhosi, and on the distribution front in the cooperatives". Thus *Pravda*, in commenting on the decree of December 4, 1932, referred to the "anti-soviet elements of the consumers' cooperative movement, who have unfortunately not yet been expelled from Centrosoyus".

The following quotation from the local newspaper of Nivastroy in October 1932, given in the *New Republic* (New York) of May 24, 1933, typifies the readiness to attribute evil to the cooperative personnel, but it must not be taken for truth. "At the very moment that our Communist Party is making a determined effort to improve workers' food supplies, class enemies are penetrating into our cooperatives, undermining their work and creating endless food difficulties. . . . The impudence of our class enemies is boundless. They overcharge, pocketing the money, thus disrupting the price policy of the government. They steal and privately sell foodstuffs of which there is a shortage—butter, meat, sugar. . . . Of the nineteen persons now on trial, almost every one is a lishenets (one deprived of his right of citizenship), or a kulak, or a former merchant who had concealed his identity and wormed himself into the workers' cooperative of Nivastroy. . . . The harm they have done is enormous, and, under present conditions, especially grave. There should be no mercy. The sentence of the proletarian court must remind all those who would misappropriate public [socialist] property, who would try to attack us from the rear, that the punitive arm of the proletarian dictatorship will bring down upon them in every instance the extreme penalty provided by the law of August 7."

Commissar, for bread, meat, fish, vegetable oils, conserves and refrigerating stores. These combinations were to be joined by all undertakings large enough to be of "All-Union" or even of "republic" significance; whilst all smaller ones had to submit to the general direction and control of the combines in order to ensure that the whole area was properly served. The Commissariats of Trade already existing in the republics, and the oblast councils of the consumers' cooperatives, became, within the several spheres, the representatives and agents of the USSR People's Commissar of Supplies. It is not easy to ascertain to what extent this ambitious scheme of coordinating under a People's Commissar all the agencies engaged in trade came practically into operation. In September 1934 this commissariat was divided into two. The People's Commissar of Supplies will now devote himself entirely to managing and increasing the supplies of all foodstuffs (including vodka and tobacco) which require any kind of preservation or "processing". When ready for retailing to the consumer, these supplies will pass under the direction of a new People's Commissar of Internal Trade, who will exercise a general control over all arrangements for retailing, by whatsoever organisations. He will be responsible for sanctioning the number of retail shops in each area, and for determining schedules of maximum prices. Under these two new USSR Commissariats there has begun a great development of direct government retailing of all sorts of commodities in most of the large cities. "During the two years 1931 and 1932 the Government commercial system was extended almost five times (from 14,700 shops on January 1, 1931, to 70,700 on January 1, 1932)."¹ These "commercial shops", which vary from great department stores down to the smallest kiosk or market counter, selling a limited range of foodstuffs, or a particular line of goods in demand, charge relatively high prices, considerably above those of the "closed" cooperatives, but often below those prevailing in the "bazaar", or open market, which it is desired to bring down.

In addition to these new "government shops", there have been, from time to time, various other retail shops for which the USSR Sovnarkom is ultimately responsible, namely, those opened in Moscow, Leningrad and some other cities, by various manufacturing trusts or combines, for the supply directly to the public of their own products. We may instance the shops selling textile fabrics opened by Textorg, a subsidiary of the Textile Combine; and those selling goloshes and other rubber goods, opened by the Rubber Trust. This undisguised encroachment on the sphere of the consumers' cooperative societies was much resented; and as it produced an obvious duplication of effort, its extension was not encouraged. Much of the retailing by the trusts has therefore been abandoned. Some of the trusts have, however, persisted, finding this independent access to the consumers of great use in enabling them to follow more closely the variations in their desires.

A newer rival in the field of retailing, maintained by the USSR People's

¹ *Supply and Trade in the USSR*, by W. Nodel, p. 31.

Commissar for Foreign Trade, is that of Torgsin—the name given to the extensive chain of shops in prominent positions, together with sales counters in hotels and tourist offices, now opened to the number in the aggregate of over one thousand, in scores of cities and towns, for the sale of all sorts of commodities, exclusively for foreign valuta, gold and silver, or precious stones. This enterprise, begun in 1930 on a small scale in Moscow and Leningrad, and at first restricted to foreign customers, had for its object, not so much the making of profit for the state, as the collection of foreign valuta for use in paying for imports. It proved so successful, and seemed to meet such a keenly felt need, that the doors of the Torgsin shops were presently opened to all comers, irrespective of nationality, provided only that they were able to pay for their purchases in gold, silver or precious stones, as well as foreign valuta, including drafts on Torgsin resulting from deposits made abroad—thus affording to foreign friends a convenient alternative to the despatch of parcels containing presents.

The consumers in Moscow, Leningrad and Kiev are even promised, at an early date, probably in 1936, the opening of "one-price stores", after the model of the Woolworth establishments in the American and western European cities. These will be maintained by the Administration of Department Stores Department of the USSR Commissariat of Supplies. They will begin by retailing household necessities, haberdashery, knitted goods, perfumes and cosmetics, in one, three and five rouble departments. There will also be 50 kopek counters for ribbons, pins, rubber bands, pencils and shoe laces. There will also be a cafeteria, where purchasers will purchase special slot coins to enable them to help themselves to iced coffee, hot rolls and various pastries.

We come now to retailing enterprises of particular local bodies. We may mention first the huge retail trade long done by the Commissariat for Supplies of the RSFSR in some of the larger cities of that republic. Though these shops and kiosks are organised according to oblast or city boundaries, and usually bear a local name, they do not usually belong to the local governing bodies but to the RSFSR People's Commissar of Supplies. In Moscow he has an enormous department store in the centre of the city, which is extremely well equipped and liberally stocked with every conceivable commodity for household use. Smaller departmental stores exist in streets in other quarters of the city, together with special shops for the sale of shoes, clothing, wine and tobacco, and a large number of kiosks and street-stands selling candy, cigarettes, etc.—making a total of over 500 selling points, at which the People's Commissar for Trade deliberately competes with the consumers' cooperative societies; not, indeed, by lower prices but by more varied stocks, and chiefly, it is said, with intent to supply models in organisation and methods of retail distribution.

Second in magnitude only to the extensive retail trading of the RSFSR People's Commissar himself, is that conducted by various local authorities

in the RSFSR. Much the most important of these enterprises is that called "Mostorg", which was originally organised as a joint-stock company to retail the products of Moscow producing trusts, in which the executive committee of the Moscow oblast had, in 1928, 77.2 per cent of the stock, whilst 10.3 per cent was held by certain trusts in the oblast, 11.2 per cent by the Moscow Municipal Bank and 1.3 per cent by the USSR People's Commissar of Finance—thus entirely owned by public authorities. It was managed by a board of five directors, elected by the corporate shareholders, and assisted by a larger council on which the trade unions and the local governing bodies were represented. Already in 1929 its total capital was over 10 million roubles. It had then nine wholesale divisions, which supplied its retail departments with hardware, technical equipment, chemicals, building supplies, knitted goods, textiles, clothing, office equipment and jewellery. It supplied materials for all building works in the oblast, and contracted with factories for the supply of working-clothes and overalls of their staffs. It long had a monopoly of the supply of the Moscow public offices with lead pencils! Its total turnover in 1928-1929 was 288 million roubles; at a working cost of under 8 per cent. Already in 1929 it had 225 shops and stores (about half in Moscow city), and over 5000 employees. In 1933 it was entirely reorganised and placed immediately under the administration of the Moscow City Soviet.¹ On the other hand, the Leningrad City Soviet does not itself maintain any retail stores.

Another type of retailing organisation is that undertaken for their own products by trusts of local significance, and thus under the direction of the municipal or other local soviet. "Mosselprom", for instance, was long a Moscow trust, employing some 15,000 persons in factories producing candies, macaroni, fancy confectionery, beer, tobacco, toys and other small articles. Half its product was taken wholesale by the consumers' cooperative organisation, the USSR trusts or the state export organisation. But the other half Mosselprom marketed itself in Moscow through its own 40 stores and 400 kiosks, and a large number of agencies in restaurants, hotels, etc. It has now ceased to exist as a separate entity, and its production and distribution have been taken over by different commissariats and the Moscow City Soviet.

The Ukraine stands second only to the RSFSR in the magnitude and range of the retail trading conducted practically by its own Sovnarkom under various commissariats.

In another field we have to notice the district pharmacy or drug-store, which, as a part of the public medical service, is everywhere conducted by the People's Commissar of Health of the particular constituent or auto-

¹ We may mention here the seldom described commission shops maintained in most cities by the municipal authorities for offering for sale all sorts of miscellaneous articles, at prices fixed by the owners, on a commission of 25 per cent. These take the place of the pawnbrokers' establishments of western Europe as an easy means of disposal of unwanted oddments of personal belongings, misfits, discarded ornaments, cast-off clothing and "white elephants" of every kind.

nomous republic. These district pharmacies are, however, to be found only in the urban areas. In the rural areas drugs are dispensed by the visiting medical practitioner or his assistants.

Nor do all these shopkeeping enterprises of the USSR and republic governments, or of the oblast or municipal governments, or of the trusts and combines that they control, exhaust the list of rivals in retailing with which the consumers' cooperative movement has to contend. Other forms of cooperation also compete for the consumers' shopping. Some retail shops in the cities are maintained by the manufacturing associations of owner-producers (incops), for the sale of linen, embroidery, toys and small articles of wood or leather. There are artels of bakers who keep retail shops for confectionery. Much more important, however, is the competition, to which we shall recur in our subsequent chapter entitled "In Place of Profit", of the collective farms in entering into contracts directly with particular factories, as well as of the individual peasants, in the direct supply of city customers with all sorts of foodstuffs; from stalls in public markets or even from baskets in the streets, down to the ubiquitous offering for sale to travellers of cooked food at every provincial railway station.¹ This direct supply of the consumer was, during 1932, greatly widened, so far as concerns the two-thirds or four-fifths of the peasants who are members of collective farms, by the definite instructions of the USSR People's Commissar for Agriculture that the whole surplus of the collectivised product, over and above the fixed quota due to the government and after all the government exactions had been duly met, together with everything produced individually by the members, may be freely sold anywhere, at any price, to the consumers, either individually or collectively in the open market² or direct to the factories or trusts, or to the public restaurants and hotels, or to any of the consumers' cooperative organisations either in separate transactions or on standing contracts.³ Nothing is forbidden to the sellers except purchase for resale at a profit, and sale to known speculators.

¹ The restaurants at the railway stations, and the supply by trolley cars on the platforms, are provided by the local cooperative societies. The dining-cars on the trains are administered by the USSR People's Commissariat for Internal Trade.

² This "open market" selling has been the subject of ever-varying decrees and municipal regulations. At times both before and after NEP, it has been encouraged and even stimulated, in order to supplement the insufficient supplies brought forward by the cooperative organisation. Then it has been discouraged and even repressed, partly because the market operations could not practically be restricted to direct sales from producer to consumer, and "speculation" (meaning buying in order to resell at a profit) became rampant; partly because the crowds of peasants were not only dirty and disorderly, but also obstructive to traffic; and partly because, in times of short supply, outrageous prices were asked, as the beginning of the bargaining characteristic of the Oriental bazaar. These were naively cited by foreigners as if they were the actual prices at which the commodities changed hands! One distinguished expert, sent out to discover the state of the crops, varied his agricultural investigations by spending an hour in the open market of every city he visited, making no purchases, but asking the price of everything, and carefully noting whatever he was asked, in due course reporting this as being the actual price level!

³ Centrosoyuz itself makes large purchases by standing contracts with kolkhosi and incops. But what stands in the way of an indefinite extension of this system of whole-

*Recent Encroachments on the Sphere of the Consumers'
Cooperative Movement*

Apart from the maintenance and even the increased development of the various rival distributing agencies that we have described, the last three or four years have witnessed a series of definite encroachments on the sphere heretofore assigned to the consumers' cooperative movement. It has become definitely part of the policy of the government to relieve both Centrosoyus and the local societies of part of the burden of their ever-increasing work. Although they have come to deal with over 70 per cent of the retail distribution of commodities in the USSR, there is no longer any idea of their eventually undertaking the whole of it. It is doubtless on other grounds that the associations of owner-producers, whether in manufacturing arts or in collective farms, have lately received, as already mentioned, so greatly enlarged a freedom to sell their products directly to the consumers, either in their own shops or at the public markets, instead of this supply necessarily going through the consumers' cooperative societies. There were other grounds, too, for the steady expansion of retailing by the central or local government that we have described. Possibly the most important of the recent encroachments on the actual or potential sphere of the consumers' cooperative movement has been the transfer to the factories themselves by decree of December 4, 1932, of the whole property and all the functions of the closed cooperative societies (ZRK) attached to the larger and more important factories, usually those having more than 2000 employees.¹ Under this decree, in which the Central Board of Centrosoyus reluctantly acquiesced, some 350 of the larger consumers' cooperative societies, with something like three million members, have been transformed. All their buildings and equipment, with their farms and other enterprises, have been transferred to the factories for the employees of which they catered, with no other compensation for the capital expenditure that had been incurred by the

sale supply with regard to foodstuffs is the necessity for submitting any large stocks to some process of drying or preservation, or else of constructing and maintaining huge cold-storage establishments.

¹ The decree of December 4, 1932, applies a similar principle to all the other closed cooperative societies (such as those for particular vocations and industries, those for the state farms (Sovkhosi) and those for the factories having fewer than 2000 employees), but not so drastically as in the case of the 262 factories, having each over 2000 employees, which were then specified. In other cases, the closed cooperative societies are to continue in existence, and in connection with the cooperative hierarchy headed by the Central Board of Centrosoyus, but to be also subject to the authority of the factory management.

"In all the factories where the closed workers' cooperatives were left intact (and these constitute a majority) the position of the factory director in regulating the utilisation of the products assigned by the State for the workers of the particular factory has been considerably strengthened. The factory administration provides transport facilities for the closed workers' cooperative, helps to organise vegetable gardens and invests considerable sums in the cooperative. The form in which the factory administration participates in the work of the cooperatives, and the financial aid given by it, are laid down in special agreements concluded between Centrosoyus and the People's Commissariats of each industry" (*Supply and Trade in the USSR*, by W. Nodel, 1934, p. 87).

cooperative organisation than the nominal creation of loans to the factories, bearing no interest and without any term for repayment, which Centrosoyus may include in its balance sheet among the cooperative assets. The members of the transformed cooperative societies suffer, indeed, no pecuniary loss, not even that of the small sums paid up on their shares in the societies now dissolved, as these sums, bearing no interest, still benefit the same individuals as trade union members working in the particular factories concerned. But they now participate in the management of their food and other supplies, not as cooperative shareholders, but as factory workers who are members of their trade union; they attend the shop, brigade or shift meetings of their co-workers, in lieu of those of the cooperative society; and instead of voting for the committee of management of that society, they vote for the shop, brigade or shift representatives on the factory commission for supplies, and other committees, as they do for their main factory committee (FZK). The production and distribution of food and the retailing of other commodities continues as before, but it now becomes an integral part of the work of the factory management. The superintendent or director of the factory, subject to the combine or trust and of the Sovnarkom, takes over the responsibility for these functions from the former cooperative society's committee of management, including the administration of farms and other cooperative departments, hitherto under the authority of the cooperative hierarchy, headed by the Central Board of Centrosoyus. The intention and object of this momentous decree was avowedly this very supersession of consumers' cooperative management by factory management. It was believed that greater efficiency in food supply, and retail distribution, and a more exact issue of ration cards,¹ would be secured by cutting away these large factory retailing establishments (ORS) from their dependence on the overburdened Centrosoyus, whilst leaving them free to purchase what they chose, whether directly from state or municipal departments acting either as wholesalers, manufacturers or agricultural producers, or from the manufacturing associations of owner-producers (incops), or the consumers' cooperative movement itself. A special commission or sub-committee of the factory committee for supplies is appointed to replace the cooperative committee of management. To manage what has become the new department of factory supplies, a deputy director, who will usually be the past president of the closed cooperative society, is appointed by the factory director, subject to the consent of this special commission of supplies. From the constitutional standpoint, in short, what has happened is a transfer of these 350-odd important enterprises from the consumers' cooperative hierarchy to the two hierarchies of the trade union and the soviets.²

¹ "A scrutiny of the persons formerly supplied through [74 of] these shops established the fact that, out of two million persons supplied by them, 273,000 persons had no connection with the 74 factories concerned, and no right to be supplied with factory rations" (*Supply and Trade in the USSR*, by W. Nodel, 1934, p. 86).

² The decree of December 4, 1932, is available in English in various summaries, such as that in the *Slavonic Review* for the first quarter of 1933; *Moscow Daily News*, November

The Principle of Self-Supply

On the other hand, the consumers' cooperative societies have been repeatedly pressed, during the last four years (1932-1935), to extend their operations from distribution to agricultural production. Why should not every one of the forty or fifty thousand separate societies, instead of contenting itself with handling the commodities supplied to it by Centrosoyus, endeavour to make its members independent of the vagaries of the transport system, independent of the shortcoming of the central organisation, and, to a large extent, independent also of the sovkhosi and kolkhosi on which they could not always count? Hence each of the various societies of consumers was urged to take on the task of producing for its own members such things as vegetables and fruit, and the produce of piggeries and dairies, with which to eke out and vary the sometimes exiguous ration to which their cards as producers entitled them. We have here one more instance of that multifariousness to which the USSR constitution is so much addicted. Many of the larger consumers' societies, and a few of the smaller ones, accordingly took to "self-supply" in this sense, with the result not only of making a perceptible addition to the nation's supplies, but also of satisfying more of their members' desires. Some idea of the magnitude already attained in this independent production by the consumers' societies may be gathered from the following statistics. At the end of the year 1933 no fewer than 4029 consumers' cooperative societies had their own *koopkhosi* or farms (excluding 1689 others maintained by the factory supply departments (ORS), representing former closed cooperative societies). The cooperative societies' farms sowed 305,800 hectares with potatoes, and 163,100 hectares with other vegetables. They produced 1,682,200 tons of potatoes, and 703,200 tons of other vegetables. They possessed 663,500 pigs and 299,300 horned cattle—truly a considerable addition to the nation's food supply!¹

The Extent of the Market

It is not easy to forecast the future sphere of the consumers' cooperative movement in the USSR. With regard to the principal issue, there is, however, no doubt. The service of distribution will certainly remain under the control not of the producers of the particular commodities and services but of the consumers and users thereof. What cannot be foreseen is how this control will be shared among the various forms that may be taken by the consumers' organisation. There is to be considered the necessary provision for the needs of the future generations of citizens,

18, 1932, December 23, 1932; *Manchester Guardian*, December 6, 1932. The lengthy memorandum (in Russian) "On the Organisational Structure of the Consumers' Cooperative System", issued by the Central Board of Centrosoyus in January 1933, gives a significantly extenuating explanation of the decree.

¹ Article by Centrosoyus on "International Cooperative Day in the USSR", in *International Cooperative Alliance Review of International Cooperation*, October 1933, p. 375.

which cannot logically or safely be entrusted to the representatives of the actual consumers of to-day. There are some kinds of commodities and services—we may instance the manufacture of requisites for the defence forces and the postal service—of which the government itself is the only consumer or user. There are others, such as railway transportation and road maintenance, and nearly all kinds of municipal activities, for which there can scarcely be any practicable voluntary organisation of individual consumers as such, as distinguished from municipal citizenship. Finally, there is the problem of supplying the needs of such agglomerations of consumers as the workers in particular factories or other establishments, or persons engaged in particular vocations, when the distribution of commodities and services can perhaps be most conveniently administered by these particular agglomerations of “producers”, as distinguished from geographically defined associations of consumers at large. As we have already described, the trade unions are, in the USSR, assuming not only the control but also the actual administration of vast services enjoyed by their members, such as social insurance. Thus there is certainly a place in the organisation of distribution for the state department and the municipality on the one hand, and for administration by industrial or other establishments on the other, or even by associations of producers such as the trade unions. How exactly the relative spheres of each of these, and of the various consumers’ cooperative societies, can best be demarcated, in different communities, at different stages of social development, remains, we think, for the future to decide. It may be suggested that the answer to the enquiry may turn on the conditions in which it proves possible to secure, from one or other kind of social institution, the most efficient management of particular branches of distribution. The consumers’ cooperative society may well continue to be the best alternative to the profit-making shopkeeper for the supply of household commodities to all the residents in the rural village, and, indeed, to all but closely segregated or exceptionally specialised groups of residents in the cities. It may be that, in the cities, some special groups of consumers may be able to secure more efficient management than a consumers’ cooperative society is likely to supply, if the distribution of household commodities to such groups is dealt with (by the aid of advisory committees concerned only with supplies) as part of the administration of the establishments in which their members are employed. In either case it is distribution under the direction of the consumers of the commodities and services they desire, not under the direction of the producers of those particular commodities. Similarly, where the government or the municipality undertakes vast services for common use, or in the interests of future generations, it does so as a universal association of consumers, under the control of the citizens; and not under that of the particular workers who produce these services.

CHAPTER V

THE VOCATION OF LEADERSHIP

IN the constitution of Soviet Communism, as we have seen, the adult inhabitant, apart from specific legal disqualifications, finds separate provision made for his or her participation and representation in three distinct capacities, namely, as a citizen, as a producer and as a consumer. We have now to add, to this unparalleled elaborateness of the representative system, an artificially constructed category that we can best describe as one of super-citizens. These men and women are not withdrawn from ordinary life or common citizenship. They have a conscious responsibility greater and deeper than that of the plain man or woman. They are held to a higher standard of behaviour, under a more stringent discipline. They are, in fact, selected out of the mass for the exercise of a special vocation,¹ and the fulfilment of a particular duty based upon a definite creed, namely, that of "Marxism" as authoritatively interpreted from time to time. This select body, universally known as the Communist Party, or simply as "the Party"—everyone else being "non-Party"—may easily be deemed the most important part of the effective constitutional structure of the USSR.² It must, however, be noted that, unlike those parts of the constitution of the USSR that we have already described—the multiform democracy of Man as a Citizen, Man as a Producer and

¹ The English word "vocation" was, for the first few centuries of its use, limited to a "calling by God or by Jesus Christ". Since the sixteenth century it has increasingly been used indiscriminately for any specialised occupation, although usually with reference to one having some sort of professional organisation or qualification. Thus Hobbes could assert, in 1651, that "Some laws are addressed . . . to particular provinces; some to particular vocations, and some to particular men" (*The Leviathan*, by Thomas Hobbes, II. xxvi. 137). But political or any other public leadership has, in England, seldom been recognised as a specialised occupation.

² Innumerable manuals and pamphlets are to be had in Russian describing the constitution, principles and duties of the Communist Party, and its junior subsidiaries (Comsomols, Pioneers and Octobrists). There are also histories of the Party in Russian, such as *History of Russian Social Democracy, 1898-1907*, by L. Martov, Moscow, 1923; *History of the Russian Social Democratic Party*, by M. N. Lyadov, Moscow, 1906, 1925. Among sources more accessible may be mentioned *Civic Training in Soviet Russia and Making Bolsheviks*, both by S. N. Harper, University of Chicago, 1931; the good chapter entitled "The Communist Party", by Jerome Davis, in *Russia in the Second Decade*, edited by Stuart Chase and others, New York, 1928; *Histoire du parti communiste de l'URSS (Parti bolchevik)*, by E. Yaroslavsky, Paris, 1931 (which is stated to have been translated from the Russian also into German, Spanish, Turkish, Tartar, Chinese and Yiddish); *Geschichte des Bolshevismus*, by A. Rosenberg, 1932, translated as *History of Bolshevism*, 1933; *La Révolution russe*, by Henri Rollin, vol. ii. entitled "Le Parti bolcheviste", Paris, 1931; *Soviet Rule in Russia*, by W. R. Batsell, 1929; *The Soviet State*, by B. W. Maxwell, 1934, pp. 38-47; *Outline History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, by N. M. Popov, 1935, translated from the 16th Russian edition; *The Seventeenth Conference of the CPSU in Questions and Answers*, compiled by S. Sheftel (Cooperative Publishing Society of Foreign Workers, Moscow, 1933), affords a convenient view of present policy.

Man as a Consumer—the Communist Party has no organic connection with the Soviet Government by statute or other form of law. Neither the organisation nor the activities of the Communist Party are so much as mentioned in the “Fundamental Law”, or in any statutory amendments of it. Nor has the Party any legal authority over the inhabitants of the USSR, not even over its own members! The only sanctions that the Party can use to control its members are those of reprimand and expulsion; and these entail no legal disability. The Party members enjoy no statutory privileges. They are individually under the same obligation as other citizens to obey the law of the land; and they can be, and are, prosecuted and punished, like other people, for any action condemned by the law. The Communist Party appears, in fact, to have practically the same status under the law as a Roman Catholic order, such as the Society of Jesus, has, or used to have, in a Roman Catholic country. If the Party influences or directs the policy of individuals or public authorities, it does so only by persuasion. If it exercises power, it does so by “keeping the conscience” of its own members, and getting them elected to office by the popular vote. Even when not holding public office, the Party members act as missionaries among the non-Party citizens in the organisations of every kind throughout the USSR. It is in this way that the Party secures the popular consent to, or at least the popular acquiescence in, the policy that it promotes.

The Communist Party has, since its establishment, changed not only its name but also its function. It was created, as the Bolshevik section of the Social Democratic Party of Russia, primarily as the instrument of revolution. It was continued and strengthened, after the seizure of power, in October 1917, as the organ by which the revolution could be maintained and directed. It exists to-day, as the student of political science will realise, chiefly as the means by which the people of the USSR, in all their multiform participation in government that we have described, are continuously supplied with intellectual leadership. To give this leadership, not merely at the centre or from the heights, but ubiquitously, in the factory or on the farm, no less than at election meetings, is the service which the voluntarily recruited membership of this remarkable companionship adopts as its life-duty. There has, in fact, been created, as part of the constitutional structure of the USSR, a highly organised Vocation of Leadership.

How the Communist Party Arose

The student of the numerous books and pamphlets, articles and letters, emanating from the little groups of Russian revolutionary exiles during the first fifteen years of the present century will have no doubt about the origin and purpose of this organisation. Though the Social Democratic Party—the definitely Marxian successor to half a dozen waves of revolutionary activity since 1825—was inaugurated at Minsk in 1898, it was Vladimir Ilych Ulianov, at that time not yet widely known as N. Lenin,

who, from 1900 onward, gradually gave the nascent party its unique form. Unlike his Russian predecessors—unlike every other party organiser—Lenin had no use, within the Party, for mere sympathisers, for partially converted disciples, for adherents who based their acts on Christianity or a general humanitarianism, or on any other theory of social life than Marxism, nor even for those whose interpretation of Marxism differed from his own. It was not a body of electors prepared to give him their votes that he was collecting. Popular election had practically no place in Tsarist Russia. For the instrument of revolution that he was forging he needed something different from an electoral force, namely, a completely united, highly disciplined and relatively small body of “professional revolutionists”, who should not only have a common creed and a common programme but should also undertake to give their whole lives to a single end, the overthrow of the entire governmental structure of the autocratic “police state”. The creation of such a body was no easy task. In interminable controversies between 1900 and 1916, we watch Lenin driving off successively all whom he could not persuade to accept his model; all whom he considered compromisers or temporisers; opportunists or reformists; half-converted sympathisers who clung to one or other form of mysticism for which Karl Marx had found no place; the Mensheviks who accepted alliances with liberalism or had other “bourgeois” tendencies, and the Social Revolutionaries who, as he thought, dreamt that individual acts of terrorism would eventually evolve a new society out of the peasant community of the Mir. With all these elements it cannot rightly be said that Lenin was intolerant. He allowed that they were fully entitled to go their own way. His attitude was one of patiently explaining to them the superior efficiency of his own line of action, and of insisting on taking his own course, with however small a fragment of disciples. It was, as he was always demonstrating, neither he nor they, nor any group whatsoever, that would make the revolution, but the proletarian mass, which had to be inspired to the necessary action, and then guided and led in the social reconstruction that must follow. For this supreme purpose what was needed was a membership, whether small or great, that was devoid not only of division but also of dubiety; so disciplined as to be able to take combined action without hesitation as soon as the word was given; and so united in their socialism as to be capable of patiently embodying it in practical administration when the time for reconstruction came. If the reader will think of this membership, provisionally, as a united confraternity, a widely spread companionship, or as a highly disciplined order, professing a distinct and dogmatic political creed, and charged with a particular vocation, rather than as a political party, he will approach nearer to an understanding of its present-day characteristics and of its sociological significance.

During the Great War the cleavage between Lenin's party and all the other revolutionary sections became ever more acute. Lenin, from the first, took up the attitude that the war was, on both sides, an

"imperialist" quarrel, with which the socialists of every country had nothing to do, except in so far as, by opposing their several governments, they could, in every country, convert the war between different groups of nations into a revolutionary upheaval of the workers against the landlords and capitalists, probably entailing civil war. All the other sections in Russia rejected this "defeatist" attitude, and supported the government, more or less consistently, in the defence of the country. The growing unpopularity of the war among all classes played into Lenin's hands. The narrowly restricted band of "professional revolutionists" that he had been slowly forming during the preceding decade had grown, by February 1917, to what then seemed the respectable number of about 30,000, dispersed, throughout the cities of the tsarist empire. That all these were in earnest about the matter was to some extent guaranteed by the constant danger of prosecution, imprisonment and exile that the mere membership of a revolutionary party had involved.¹

But the unobtrusive recruiting, and the secret admission by local groups scattered all over Russia, were incompatible, alike with any scrupulously careful selection of members and with the elaboration of party machinery. During the eight months of the Provisional Government in 1917, the membership of the party, still called the Russian Workmen's Social Democratic Party (Bolshevik), grew rapidly to nearly 200,000. In 1918, after its accession to power, the highly disciplined Party

¹ To the efficiency of the organisation, and to the amazing success of the Party that Lenin had organised, Mr. H. G. Wells bore eloquent testimony in 1920: "From end to end of Russia, and in the Russian-speaking community throughout the world, there existed only one sort of people who had common general ideas upon which to work, a common faith and a common will, and that was the Communist Party. While all the rest of Russia was either apathetic like the peasantry, or garrulously at sixes and sevens, or given over to violence and fear, the Communists believed and were prepared to act. Numerically they were and are a very small part of the Russian population. . . . Nevertheless, because it was in those terrible days the only organisation which gave men a common idea of action, common formulas and mutual confidences, it was able to seize and retain control of the smashed Empire. It was and it is the only sort of administrative solidarity possible in Russia. These ambiguous adventurers who have been and are afflicting Russia, with the support of the Western Powers, Denikin, Kolchak, Wrangel and the like, stand for no guiding principle and offer no security of any sort upon which men's confidence can crystallise. They are essentially brigands. The Communist Party, however one may criticise it, does embody an idea, and can be relied on to stand by its idea. So far it is a thing morally higher than anything that has yet been brought against it. It at once secured the passive support of the peasant mass by permitting them to take land from the estates and by making peace with Germany. It restored order—after a frightful lot of shooting—in the great towns. For a time everybody found carrying arms without authority was shot. This action was clumsy and brutal but effective. To retain its power the Communist Government organised Extraordinary Commissions with practically unlimited powers, and crushed out all opposition by a Red Terror. Much that that Red Terror did was cruel and frightful, it was largely controlled by narrow-minded men, and many of its officials were inspired by social hatred and the fear of counter-revolution, but if it was fanatical it was honest. Apart from individual atrocities, it did on the whole kill for a reason and to an end. Its bloodshed was not like the silly aimless butcheries of the Denikin régime, which would not even recognise, I am told, the Bolshevik Red Cross. And to-day the Bolshevik Government sits, I believe, in Moscow, as securely established as any government in Europe; and the streets of the Russian towns are as safe as any streets in Europe" (*Russia in the Shadows*, by H. G. Wells, 1920, pp. 61-64).

changed its name to the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik). In 1922, on the formation of the Soviet Union, the Party became the Communist Party of the USSR (Bolshevik). By the end of 1932 its numbers (including "candidates" or probationers) had, without any lessening of the obligations of membership, and in spite of continuous "cleansing" and repeated purges, risen to more than 3,300,000. At the Seventeenth Party Congress of January 1934 considerable changes were made in the Party organisation, and in the nomenclature of some of its organs, the terms cell, nucleus and fraction being dropped. We have now to describe the Party of to-day, which, after the last drastic purge of 1933, counts, in 1935, nearly three million members and probationers.

The Party Membership

Admission to Party membership is, and has always been, conferred as a privilege, to which no one has any prescriptive right, and in conformity with definite rules, to which no exception is allowed. Applicants for admission must, of course, profess whole-hearted acceptance of the communist creed, as laid down by Marx and as interpreted by Lenin and Stalin. They must manifest this adhesion in their lives by being habitually politically "active" in their respective spheres; not only by displaying zeal in their daily work of production or service, but also by spontaneously undertaking extra duties of social influence. They must be warranted entirely free from Christian or any other religious or metaphysical "ideology", regarded as inconsistent with whole-hearted adhesion to Marxian communism. No member of the "deprived categories", such as ministers of religion or monks, kulaks or former landlords, capitalist employers or traders, can be admitted under any circumstances.¹ Nor must applicants have a "pretty bourgeois ideology", nor, indeed, any marked attachment to private property. A desire to live without work, or any considerable amount of personal possessions, would certainly be a bar to admission. Would-be members have to be formally recommended for admission to probationary membership (in which stage they are known as "candidates") by two, three or five Party members, who know them personally and who are held responsible for their recommendations, even to the extent of being summarily expelled from the Party for any negligence or improper partiality. Even on the highest recommendation, candidates are not finally accepted as members until they finish a probationary period of at least one year or two years, according to their class

¹ "Former members of other parties [meaning particularly the Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionaries] are admitted in exceptional cases on the recommendation of five Party members, three of whom must be of ten years' Party standing and two of pre-revolutionary Party standing; and only through an industrial primary organisation; the admission of such a candidate must be endorsed by the Central Committee of the Communist Party irrespective of the social status of the applicant. . . . They have to go through a three years' period of probation" (Rules, I (c) and note to II, 12, in *Socialism Victorious*, 1934, pp. 693, 696). Such admissions are now extremely rare and entirely exceptional.

status at the date of application. During this period of probation the candidate pays the full membership dues, varying according to his salary or other income, and he is summoned to all open meetings; he is assigned tasks and generally treated as a member, except that he is not allowed to vote on Party decisions. More important is the fact that he is watched by his new comrades; his conduct is periodically reported on, and his character is carefully studied. If he is not considered in all respects satisfactory, his application will either be summarily rejected, or his period of probation will be extended.

The requirements for admission as candidates differ in detail according to age, occupation and social heritage.¹ Admission is most easily gained either by young people between eighteen and twenty, of workman or peasant parentage, who have been serving as Comsomols; or, with a similar parentage, by conscripts actually serving in the Red Army; or by outstanding manual-working wage-earners in productive industry. It is, in fact, from these three sources that the great majority of candidates now come. The preponderance in the Party membership of actual manual workers is carefully maintained, although not without some difficulty. Whilst it is comparatively easy, even with ubiquitous work in recruiting, to keep the aggregate of admissions duly balanced, so many of those of workman or peasant parentage, entering from the ranks of the Comsomols, the Red Army or the factory operatives, presently become salaried organisers or office workers, or obtain promotion in due course as administrators, lecturers or technicians, that the proportion of Party members at any one time actually working at the bench or the forge is always in danger of dropping below 50 per cent. To ensure a substantial majority to such industrial manual workers was one of the motives that led, in 1924-1925, to the simultaneous admission of the "Lenin contingent", in commemoration of the death of the great leader, when no fewer than 200,000 of the outstanding wage-earning men and women in

¹ Thus, whilst there is a universal minimum age for admission of eighteen years, youths of either sex under twenty years of age, if not actually serving in the Red Army, are admitted only after training and service in the League of Communist Youth (Comsomols), to be subsequently described. Industrial workmen with a production record of not less than five years must submit recommendations from three Party members of five years' Party standing, and are subject only to a year's probation. Industrial workers with a production record of less than five years; agricultural workers; Red Army men from among workers or collective farmers; and engineers and technicians working directly in shops or sectors must have five recommendations from Party members of five years' Party standing, and are subject to two years' probation. Collective farmers; members of handicraft or artisan arts; and elementary school teachers, must have five recommendations from Party members of five years' Party standing, and also the recommendation of a representative of the political department of the Machine and Tractor Station or of the Party District Committee, and are subject to two years' probation. Other employed persons must have five recommendations from Party members of ten years' Party standing, and are subject to two years' probation. In the case of a Comsomol of any of the above categories, the recommendation of the Comsomol District Committee is treated as equivalent to those of two Party members. The new class of sympathisers are admitted to Sympathisers' Groups by the local Party Committee on the recommendation of two Party members.

the factories and mines, chosen very largely by their non-Party fellow-workers, were accepted as candidates within a few months.¹

In connection with the general "cleansing" of the Party in 1933, which we shall presently describe, there was instituted a new class of associates, called "sympathisers", being those who, although loyal and zealous, proved to be intellectually incapable of explaining or expounding Marxism, or the General Line of the Party, in such a way as to make it plain to the outside enquirer. Such persons are excluded from the roll of Party members, and thus deprived of a decisive vote in Party meetings; they are to be formed into "Sympathisers' Groups", who are to be attached to the Primary Party Organs, the meetings of which these sympathisers are required to attend, and in which they may have a consultative vote.

The Rules of the Order ²

Apart from a relatively high standard of personal behaviour, there are three fundamental requirements that are strictly enforced. The first concerns unity of doctrine and practice. The Party member must unhesitatingly adhere to the "General Line" in communist theory and soviet policy, as authoritatively laid down from time to time; and must be guilty neither of "right deviation" nor "left deviation". There is, indeed, laid upon the Party member an obligation of union and loyalty far beyond that imposed on the non-Party masses. On new issues, and, in fact, in all matters not yet authoritatively decided on, there is, even for the Party member, complete freedom of thought and full liberty of discussion and controversy, private or public, which may continue, as in the series of Trotsky debates in 1925-1927, even for years.³ But once

¹ Of this mass-recruiting, Stalin remarked in April 1924 as under: "Our Party has recently added 200,000 new working-class members to its ranks. The remarkable thing about these new members is that they have not, for the most part, entered the Party on their own initiative, but have been sent by their non-Party fellow workers, who took an active hand in proposing the new members, and without whose approval no new members would have been admitted" (*Leninism*, by J. Stalin, vol. i., 1928, p. 164).

² The rules of the Communist Party will be found in English in various publications; see, for instance, that entitled *Resolutions and Decisions* [of the Seventeenth Party Congress] including *Party Rules* (Cooperative Publishing Society of Foreign Workers, Moscow, 1934, 84 pp.); or the volume published in London entitled *Socialism Victorious* (Martin Lawrence, 1934), pp. 689-711.

The Party dues are as under:

20 kopeks per month on an income	up to 100 roubles
60 " " "	101 " 150 "
1 rouble " "	151 " 200 "
1.50 roubles " "	201 " 250 "
2 " " "	251 " 300 "
2 per cent on incomes	301 to 500 roubles
3 " " "	over 500 "

In addition, there is an initiation fee of 2 per cent of the current wage payable on admission as a candidate.

³ Rule IX. 57 declares that "the free and positive discussion of questions of Party policy in individual organs of the Party, or in the Party as a whole, is the inalienable right of every Party member, derived from internal Party democracy. Only on the basis of

any issue is authoritatively decided by the Party, in the All-Union Party Congress or its Central Committee, all argument and all public criticism, as well as all opposition, must cease; and the Party decision must be loyally accepted and acted upon without obstruction or resistance, on pain of expulsion; and, if made necessary by action punishable by law, also of prosecution, deportation or exile.

The second requirement from the Party member is that of implicit and complete obedience to the corporate Party authority. He must take up and zealously perform any task or duty entrusted to him. In the exercise of this duty he must go wherever he is ordered, pursue any occupation assigned to him, reside wherever required, and, in the service of the establishment of soviet communism throughout the world, generally submit himself to whatever course of conduct is thought best by his superiors in the Party hierarchy. In this respect the position of the Party member seems to resemble that of the member of a typical religious order in the Roman Catholic Church.

The third requirement of the Party member is also analogous to that of the member of a religious order. He does not actually take a vow of poverty, but in applying for and in accepting Party membership he knowingly accepts the regulation bringing every Party member under strictly defined limits of salary or other earnings, which are based on the principle that his income should be not substantially greater than that of the skilled and zealous manual worker. This regulation, which embodies the communist objection to the usual practice of allowing, and even desiring, the work of government to fall into the hands of a wealthy class, or at least of a class of administrators having a markedly different standard of life from that of the people they are governing, was first made by the Paris Commune of 1871. It was at once approved by Karl Marx, and was, a whole generation later, adopted by Lenin for his nascent party of revolutionists, who in tsarist times, with very few exceptions, necessarily lived abstemious lives, whether as almost destitute exiles or as persecuted proletarians in "underground Russia". It has, from the first, been the rule of the Bolshevik Party; a rule which, though varying in details from time to time and even from place to place, is reported, even by hostile critics of the Party, to have been continuously maintained and substantially

internal Party democracy is it possible to develop Bolshevik self-criticism and to strengthen Party discipline, which must be conscious and not mechanical. But extensive discussion, especially discussion on an All-Union scale, of questions of Party policy, must be so organised that it cannot lead to attempts by an insignificant minority to impose its will upon the vast majority of the Party, or to attempt to form factional groupings which break the unity of the Party; to attempts at a split which may shake the strength and endurance of the dictatorship of the proletariat to the delight of the enemies of the working class. Therefore a wide discussion on an All-Union scale can be regarded as necessary only if (a) this necessity is recognised by at least several local Party organisations whose jurisdiction extends to a region or a republic each; (b) if there is not a sufficiently solid majority on the Central Committee itself on very important questions of Party policy; (c) if in spite of the existence of a solid majority on the Central Committee which advocates a definite standpoint, the Central Committee still deems it necessary to test the correctness of its policy by means of a discussion in the Party."

enforced.¹ There is a corresponding provision relating to extraneous earnings, such as those from authorship or journalism, which are much affected by Party members. Of all such earnings, in addition to the ordinary progressive income tax to which all residents in the USSR are liable, Party members have to surrender to the Party funds 20 or 30 per cent of the total, and in extreme cases even 50 per cent.² It need not be said that this prescribed maximum of personal income by way of salary or extraneous earnings is exclusive of all "functional expenses", which are provided to any extent that the task or duty appears to require.³ Thus, officials, whether or not Party members, have all travelling expenses paid, proceeding frequently by aeroplane. They have at their disposal a liberal supply of motor cars, which are not supposed to be used for pleasure. They very naturally enjoy, though as officials in the overcrowded cities and not as Party members, a valuable preference in the allocation of apartments (though without any privilege in the permissible extent of accommodation); and they, like many million industrial workers, are, again as government officials and not as Party members, entitled to shop at the retail stores maintained at their several establishments (the "closed cooperative societies"), with less restricted supplies of "deficiency" commodities, and more carefully limited prices, than are available to the unfavoured citizen. But, subject to all these necessary qualifications, it is a fact that the administrators of Soviet Communism in the USSR, even of the highest grades, including the People's Commissars in the Sovnarkom, and the heads of the great consumers' cooperative

¹ Until recently, the regulation appears to have been that the Party member may not take for himself in Moscow any salary higher than 300 roubles per month. With the rise in both wages and prices, this has lately been raised to 600 roubles per month. If his office carries a higher salary, the balance has to be surrendered to the Party. In some districts, assumed to have lower costs of living, the permissible maximum may be even lower. To this rule an exception was made in 1932, apparently by private Party circular; an exception which has led to the mistake, eagerly disseminated by enemies of the régime, that the Party maximum had been abolished. Where a Party member is employed as a technician, actually in the works, not merely in administration, he may now receive a salary equal to that paid to any non-Party technician in that establishment, not being a foreigner serving on a special contract. The highest case is said to be 900 roubles per month. The motive for this exception is said to have been a desire to encourage Party members to qualify themselves to replace in due course both the foreign and the non-Party specialists, whose services are at present indispensable. It should be added, as a possible further exception, that the latest arrangements allow the governing body of a trust or combine, having a surplus on the year's production in the nature of profit, to allocate a fixed proportion of this surplus not exceeding one per cent to any way of improving the enterprise that may seem to them expedient. There may thus be, in some cases, an extra payment to the responsible technicians by way of premiums for some exceptional device for extra production. These exceptions, which affect only a tiny proportion of the Party members, and these not the highest in authority, illustrate the stringency of the rule.

² If a Party member wins a high prize in the state lottery loans, the Party authorities decide what proportion of it he should surrender to the Party—in this case the sum being allocated to a special fund for pensioning superannuated members. Party members awarded a premium for a valuable industrial invention or winning a prize in the lottery loan often cede the whole of it to the Party, or to some public fund.

³ Thus, soviet embassies or legations in foreign countries may be maintained at any standard of expenditure, and with as much diplomatic entertaining, as is deemed expedient.

movement, unlike the leading administrators of every other great nation, are found occupying flats of three or four rooms, with their wives often going out to work for wages, and altogether living a life not substantially differing, in the total of personal expenditure, from that which is open to the most highly skilled manual workers of their own country.

The Meaning of Leadership

What, then, is the vocation that the two or three million Party members undertake on these terms in the USSR of to-day? They constitute, it is said, the vanguard of the proletariat, or, varying the metaphor, the spear-head of its activity, in the maintenance of the Bolshevik revolution and the building up of the socialist state.¹ But what does this mean in practice?

At all times more than half the Party membership, as we have mentioned, continues at its manual labour in the factory or the mine, in the oil-fields or at the hydro-electric plants, on the farms or in the railway or postal service, with the mercantile marine or the river-transport vessels. The specific Party duty of these million or more members is so to lead their manual-working lives as to be perpetually influencing the minds of the ten or twenty times as numerous non-Party colleagues among whom they work. They must set themselves to be the most zealous, the most assiduous, the most efficient workers of their several establishments. They must neglect no opportunity of raising their own qualifications and increasing their technical skill. They must make themselves the leaders among the wage-earners, employing every means of educating the non-Party mass in communist doctrine and soviet policy. In the meetings of the trade union and the consumers' cooperative society, as in the manufacturing artel and the collective farm, they must, in concert with their comrades in the concern, constantly take an active part, using their influence to guide the whole membership towards the most complete fulfilment of the function of the organisation in the socialist state, along the lines from time to time authoritatively prescribed. We see them, accordingly, filling the "shock brigades" and "cost-accounting brigades", by means of which the output is increased, "scrap" is diminished, waste prevented and the production cost per unit reduced to a minimum. With the same object they lead their shifts, teams, brigades or whole establish-

¹ The preamble to the Rules, as adopted in 1934, declares that "The Party effects the leadership of the proletariat, the toiling peasantry and all toiling masses in the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat, for the victory of socialism. . . . The Party is a unified militant organisation held together by conscious iron proletarian discipline. The Party is strong because of its coherence, unity of will and unity of action, which are incompatible with any deviation from the programme, with any violation of Party discipline or with informal groupings within the Party. The Party demands from all its members active and self-sacrificing work to carry out the programme and rules of the Party, to fulfil all decisions of the Party and its organs, to ensure unity within the Party, and the consolidation of the fraternal international relations among the toilers of the nationalities of the USSR, as well as among the proletarians of the whole world" (Preamble to Rules in *Socialism Victorious*, 1934, p. 691).

ments into successive "socialist competitions" with others working in the same field. They freely undertake the numerous "spare time" offices connected with their various organisations, which are either wholly unpaid or only slightly remunerated, such as insurance officers, dues collectors, social club officials, or secretaryship of this or that committee; realising that such service increases their influence upon their fellow-workers. It is to be noted that their power over the workers has to be entirely educational and persuasive in character, not authoritative. The Party members in any establishment cannot, as such, give any orders, either to the management or to their fellow-workers. They can impose no policy. They can change nothing but the minds of the men and women among whom they work. This persuasive training of the non-Party mass, continuously effected by a million of the principal manual-working leaders, unobtrusively organised in tens of thousands of Party cells, represents a social influence of incalculable potency.

For some 40 per cent or more of the Party membership, the vocation takes the form of salaried service in the innumerable kinds and grades of public administration, including trade union and cooperative, and even the voluntary organisations that we shall hereafter describe. These offices are by no means confined to Party members, or even to persons of communist opinions. It seems that, in various important branches of public administration, Party members are actually in a minority among those in receipt of departmental pay. In the factory operatives and villagers taken by conscription for the Red Army; among the band of nearly a million salaried employees of the consumers' cooperative societies; in the staff of half a million teachers in the elementary and secondary school service; among the eighty thousand members of the medical profession, and even in the tiny membership of the College of Advocates (corresponding to the British or American lawyers); in the host of subordinate civil servants, typists and attendants, even in the Moscow Kremlin itself, there is reported to be, for various reasons, an overwhelming non-Party majority. In the directly elected soviets, as we have mentioned, the proportion of Party members is increasing, but except in the cities they are usually in a minority; and in the more remote or more primitive villages—largely from sheer lack of a sufficient number of Party candidates—they seldom fill more than a quarter of the seats. Out of nearly two million elected members of primary soviets in city and country in the whole USSR, it seems as if three-quarters of a million are Party members or Comsomols. In 1934 the Party members constituted 18.9 per cent, and the Comsomols, 11.5 per cent of all the village soviets; whilst in the city soviets their percentages were 42.0 and 11.9.

The Party Group (late fraction)

On the other hand, it is to be noticed that the Party members elected to any soviet, or finding themselves members of any other body in which

there are non-Party colleagues, are definitely instructed, whenever there are as many as three of them together, invariably to form a private caucus among themselves, which is called a Party Group. This caucus is imperatively directed to hold regular private meetings, in order to consider every subject coming before the whole body; and always to decide, by a majority, what shall be "the Party line" on each issue. Every Party member is then peremptorily required, as an incident of his Party obedience, to adopt as his own the decision thus arrived at. For the Party members on any public body to split among themselves, and vote otherwise than as their own majority decides, is one of the most heinous of Party offences, and one which is practically never committed. The Party rules prescribe, as the specific tasks of the Party Group "the strengthening of every side of the influence of the Party, the execution of its policy outside the Party, and Party control of the work of all the particular institutions and organisations concerned". For its current work the group may appoint a bureau and a secretary. With this universal organisation of Party Groups, the Party members obtain far greater weight in any public body than any other section; greater, even, than the usual superiority of these picked professionals to the bulk of the non-Party members would otherwise secure to them. For this as well as for other reasons, Party members will now usually be found in a majority in the various higher councils, and in the committees that the primary soviets elect; and this preponderance steadily increases, tier after tier, up each hierarchy, whether soviet, trade union, consumers' cooperative movement or manufacturing association of owner-producers (artels or incops). The highest governing bodies in all these hierarchies are found to be almost wholly composed of Party members, though even in these (excluding, of course, that of the Communist Party itself) there are usually a few non-Party persons.¹

This preponderance of Party members in administration is even more marked in the higher executive offices to which appointments are made by the congresses, conferences and councils. Thus, the People's Commissars (ministers of state), constituting the sovnarkoms (cabinets), alike of the USSR and of the constituent and autonomous republics of the Union, are invariably Party members, together with their assistants or deputies.² The various control commissions are invariably made up of Party members. Nearly all the trusts and combines are directed by boards composed (except for a few non-Party technicians), exclusively of Party members. All the higher commanders (officers) of the Red Army,

¹ It should be noted that the Party rules expressly prescribe that, "irrespective of their importance, the Groups are completely subordinated to the corresponding Party organisations. In all questions the Groups must strictly and undeviatingly adhere to the decisions of the leading Party organisations."

² We hear of only one exception. Mr. Winter, the universally respected and trusted Russian engineer of Dnieprostroi, though not a Party member, has been appointed Deputy People's Commissar of Heavy Industry (*Moscow, 1911-1933*, by Allan Monkhouse, 1933). He has since joined the Party.

together with a majority of the junior commanders (subalterns) are Party members. Most of the directors of industrial establishments of all kinds are Party members, although the technicians whom they control still include a considerable proportion of non-Party persons. The same may be said of the institutions of higher education, whether university colleges or "technicums"; and likewise of the various medical institutions, and even of nearly all the "cultural" institutions, such as libraries, theatres and "parks of culture and rest". In short, the Party members who are office-bearers, and who are all pledged to complete obedience to the dictates of the Party authorities, have assumed as their main vocation the supreme direction of policy and the most important parts of its execution, in every branch of public administration in the USSR, where public administration covers a much larger part of the common life than it does in any other country. And just as the Communist Party cell in the factory or the institution co-ordinates and directs the influence which the Party members exercise among their fellow-workers, so the Communist Party Central Committee, and especially the inner Politbureau which it appoints, not only prescribes the general line to be pursued by all the Party cells throughout the USSR, but also coordinates and directs the policy and executive action of the Sovnarkom of People's Commissars, and of all the Party members who constitute the most important part of the staffs of these commissariats. It is in this way, in fact, that is exercised the dictatorship of the proletariat.¹

The Primary Party Organ (late cell or nucleus)

It is interesting to find the Communist Party in the USSR organised on substantially the same hierarchical or pyramidal pattern of Democratic Centralism as that we have described as common to the soviets, the trade unions, the consumers' cooperative societies and the incops or associations of owner-producers in industry. The base of the Party organisation is what used to be called the cell, or nucleus, but which the 1934 Rules call the Primary Party Organ. This is constituted among the members employed in any enterprise, whatever its object or character, or residing

¹ We may notice, as one of the numerous "projections" of the central Party organisation, the implicit obligation imposed on individual Party members to support, in any emergency, the constituted public authority, to maintain order, and to protect public property. Thus it is the duty of Party members travelling on the Volga steamboats to report themselves immediately to the captain, so that he may be able to invoke their assistance whenever required. If anything is going wrong, the Party members will consult together, as if they were a fraction; and they may collectively press the captain to take appropriate action (as, for instance, the summary dismissal of a steward or other member of the ship's company who is so drunk as to cause annoyance to the passengers). A Party member travelling on a train, or even passing along the road, will feel bound to intervene to maintain public order, and to prevent assault or robbery, or the destruction of public property. On announcing his Party membership, he will usually be able to secure obedience, or, if not, he can command any militiaman (police constable) or local official to take action. In many ways his position towards the public, and especially towards ill-doers, is not unlike that of an English "special constable", if not of a Justice of the Peace in the eighteenth century.

in any village where as many as three members of the Party are found. Thus, every industrial establishment, whether factory or mine, electric plant or poultry incubating enterprise, newspaper office or state farm, has at least one Primary Party Organ in each of its departments. Every other social institution, whether university, college or "technicum", hospital or maternity clinic, trade union office or cooperative store, kustar artel or collective farm, has its Primary Organ. The same may be said of every depôt or centre of the railway and postal services, of every branch of the provincial and municipal administration and of every department of the central government. Every vessel in the growing mercantile marine and every soviet agency in foreign countries is similarly equipped. Apart from all enterprises and specific organisations, there are Primary Party Organs for units, areas such as villages in which there are few Party members or none employed in agriculture for wages or salary, but in which members of the Party reside as school or post-office or railway employees, or as peasant agriculturists (not being kulaks), especially in collective farms, or as independent handicraftsmen. In fact as many as one-half of all the cells (comprising, however, a very much smaller proportion of the entire Party membership) are to be found in such villages. In 1933, on the institution of "politotdeli" or "policy sections" (which we have described in our chapter on Collective Farms) to cope with the crisis in agriculture, the Central Committee sought to reorganise the cells in the rural districts. "Very frequently", it was observed, "the village Party groups, consisting chiefly of communists employed in rural institutions such as the village soviet, the post office, the militia [local police], the schools, and so on, have little contact with the collective farms, and give little attention to their work. . . . In the future the communists working directly on collective farms will form a distinct nucleus, to be controlled by the policy sections; while those members of the Party who are employed in village institutions which have no immediate connection with the collective farms will be organised separately and be subordinated to the district committee. Where the number of communists in the collective farm is too small to be formed into a nucleus, they will be grouped together with the comsomols and sympathisers, and formed into a communist comsomol unit of the collective farm. . . . For purposes of further coordination of the work of the policy sections and district committees, the chiefs of the policy sections will act as members of the district committee bureau."¹

In normal times the procedure of formation of new primary organs is simple enough. A meeting is called of all the known Party members; a resolution constituting the cell is passed; a secretary and president are elected (who must be of at least a year's standing as Party members); and formal sanction for the new organ is sought and obtained from the next higher unit of Party organisation, the district committee. It is the duty of every Party member to accept membership of the Party Organ

¹ Decree of the Central Committee of the Communist Party; in *Moscow Daily News*, July 17, 1933.